



*Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond*  
**April 10 – 17, 2014**

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# Aboriginal Arts & Culture

## Legacy lives on at the First Nations University powwow

**Chasity Delorme reflects on the memory of elder Lilly Daniels as the spring powwow gets underway**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 11, 2015 4:18 PM CT Last Updated: Apr 12, 2015 6:51 AM CT

The First Nations University of Canada's annual Spring Celebration Powwow holds a special significance this year for many dancers in the Regina community.

Chasity Delorme, a committee member with the spring powwow, says she has "huge moccasins to fill."

That's because Delorme is one of the women carrying on the legacy of the late elder Lilly Daniels, who started powwow classes at the Albert-Scott Community Centre in the city's North Central neighbourhood.

"It wasn't anything for her to purchase the fabric, the jingles, the feathers — anything that a youth or a tiny tot needed — and go home and make an outfit for them within days," Delorme told CBC, becoming emotional as she described the influence of Daniels.

She added that Daniels continued to sew even after having a stroke and losing the use of one of her arms.

Daniels died in March at the age of 80 and handed down her dance troupe to Delorme.

Both Delorme and Kim Wenger, also of the Albert-Scott powwow, spoke with Stefani Langenegger on CBC Radio's *The Morning Edition* during a live show at the community centre on Friday.

## Spring powwow



The 37<sup>th</sup> annual First Nations University of Canada's Spring Powwow is taking place this weekend at the Brandt Centre in Regina. (Tory Gillis/CBC)

Delorme said that as a committee member with the spring powwow, she worked for four nights a week with parents leading up to the event to design regalia for the youth participants.

"It is amazing for the parents that get involved in actually creating the regalia because then they learn the teachings that go behind it," Delorme said. "They're realizing the patience and dedication that it takes to make the regalia."

She estimated that between 700 and 1,000 dancers are taking part in a variety of programs at the 37<sup>th</sup> annual Spring Celebration Powwow.

The university powwow is running this weekend in Regina at the Brandt Centre.

The grand entry, during which all the dancers wear full regalia, takes place at 12 p.m. CST and 7 p.m. on each day.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/legacy-lives-on-at-the-first-nations-university-powwow-1.3029507>

## **Rub shoulders with aboriginal artists at this unique Vancouver hotel**

MARSHA LEDERMAN

VANCOUVER — The Globe and Mail

Published Monday, Apr. 13 2015, 4:05 PM EDT

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You can go to Vancouver and stay in a sparkling glass-tower hotel and enjoy the spa treatments, the first-class dining and the spectacular ocean vistas. But for a hotel experience that offers a very different view of the city – perhaps more authentic and eye-opening – consider [Skwachays Lodge](#), a remarkable new project in one of the city's most vibrant, interesting neighbourhoods. Just don't expect egg-white omelettes at your door or a Chanel boutique around the corner.

Skwachays, owned and operated by the Vancouver Native Housing Society, is a boutique hotel with themed rooms created by aboriginal artists. It's also part of a social enterprise in the heart of the Downtown Eastside, existing side by side (or, more to the point, top to bottom) with social housing. The building encompasses three operations: The hotel and Urban Aboriginal Fair Trade Gallery are meant to subsidize long-term transitional housing for aboriginal artists-in-residence, who can stay up to three years.



From the exterior, Skwachays (pronounced squa-CHIZE), just steps from the historic Chinatown and Gastown districts, is an intriguing architectural mash-up: Its Victorian façade is topped with a majestic longhouse-inspired structure and totem pole. The building has separate entrances for hotel guests and residents, although chance encounters occur in the elevator and meetings can be arranged. So hotel guests can rub shoulders with artists who live in the building – and buy their work.

These ties with First Nations artists offer visitors a connection to the region's aboriginal heritage and life. And because it's also a social enterprise, available can feel good about staying here: They are subsidizing supportive housing.

“We are a Vancouver hotel that’s making a difference – that’s how we see ourselves in this community,” Skwachays general manager, Maggie Edwards, said.

“I think the exposure of aboriginal art can be very transformative to the community. We not only showcase the culture, we create a platform where [artists] can showcase their product, sell their product. It’s a path toward financial independence.”

The boutique hotel, which opened last fall, is part of a growing trend in tourism: authentic Canadian aboriginal cultural experiences. A report commissioned by the Aboriginal Tourism Association of Canada, to be released soon, shows substantial growth in the industry since 2002: It now provides more than 30,000 jobs in Canada, according to ATAC chair Keith Henry.



The Longhouse suite at Skwachays Lodge. (Craig Minielly/Aura Photographics)

“We’re seeing an increasing demand by the travel trade ... and consumers both in Canada and throughout the world,” said Henry, who is also chief executive officer of the Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia. “The world is interested in the history and culture of Canada in its historical sense with the aboriginal people.”

The building that houses Skwachays used to be the old Pender residential hotel; it was abandoned and derelict when it was leased to the Vancouver Native Housing Society in 2008. The group kept the façade but gutted the place, creating 24 self-contained units meant for transitional social housing, along with 18 basic hotel rooms meant for aboriginal patients available from remote areas to receive medical treatment. Those hotel rooms were intended to support the transitional housing, but the hotel was not busy or successful.

Then came a serendipitous 2012 visit by Vancouver resident Jon Zwickel, whose company InnVentures advises the hospitality industry. Friends of his interested in aboriginal art were visiting from New York, so they all stopped by the hotel's art gallery. They noticed a man in the corner with a mop and bucket, dealing with a major leak. It wasn't a caretaker, but VNHS chief executive officer Dave Eddy. Zwickel came back later, struck up a conversation with Eddy and wound up volunteering to help upgrade the hotel.



The Moon suite. (Craig Minielly/Aura Photographics)

“It struck me that there was the gallery, and the live-work studios, but there was no connective tissue between that and the hotel rooms,” Zwickel recalled. “There was nothing unique or special or sense of place within those rooms. And it struck me that maybe there was an opportunity to integrate aboriginal art into the suites.”

He came up with the idea to turn that part of the enterprise into an aboriginal art hotel. They found First Nations artists (and one non-native artist who works with aboriginal artists and motifs) to create themed rooms, and paired them with interior design firms. Artists and designers donated their time.

“[I] laid out some parameters which fundamentally came down to: Each room will be a blank canvas, an empty box – it’s up to the artist to create a vision for that room, and then the interior designer is charged with collaborating with the artist and converting that vision into a functioning hotel suite,” Zwickel said. “Just those parameters – go for it.”

Two and a half years later, each hotel room is a work of art, with custom-built furniture and original artwork.





Profits from the hotel rooms and aboriginal art gallery at Skwachays go to the Vancouver Native Housing Society. (Jimmy Jeong for The Globe and Mail)

Clifton Fred's Poem Suite is a wall-to-wall experience, with his pencil drawings and poetry papering the walls and immersing the hotel guest in art inspired by Tlingit mythology. Cursive words above the headboard include "whispered," "guidance," "elders" and "peace." How's that to help lull you to sleep?

In the striking Moon Suite, the work of artists Sabina Hill and Mark Preston, a queen bed sits on a circular pedestal beneath a painted golden moon that watches over sleeping guests.

As you enter Cree artist Jerry Whitehead's Forest Spirits Suite, it is as if you are walking into the woods, with strips of white birch on the walls resembling trees, and framing a large painting of a family. The bedroom area is dominated by woodland wallpaper, and even the desk chair features a carved tree branch motif.

Whitehead, who designed three rooms, enjoyed the experience and believes the social enterprise is doing good work. "A lot of artists down here are barely making it, and then for this to come along, it really helped them out," Whitehead said.

The neighbourhood has its challenges, to be sure. Homelessness, mental illness and drug use are visible issues. The first time I visited Skwachays, I witnessed a distraught woman standing at the entrance of a nearby public health centre, yelling. That said, I have never felt unsafe in the neighbourhood.



Yvonne Lai, left, of the Urban Aboriginal Fair Trade Gallery negotiates with artists Grant Pauls and Terrence Campbell over some of their work. (Jimmy Jeong for The Globe and Mail)

You won't find a gym or hot tub at Skwachays, but it does have a First Nations sweat lodge on the spectacular longhouse patio, and a dramatic smudge room designed to evoke the outdoors. Guests can book an authentic ceremony with an elder – I would trade a run-of-the-mill, hot-stone massage for this kind of experience any day. The hotel also offers meet-and-greet events with the resident artists.

Zwickel said Skwachays is on track for its best year ever, with revenues up at both the gallery and the hotel. But there's more to this venture's success than its bottom line.

"I feel with the introduction of these hotel suites, we've completed the circle within the building. Now a guest can check in, explore the art [in the gallery], spend time in the room ... then go down to the gallery again and possibly purchase or commission work by the artist who created the room that they stayed in," Zwickel said.

"Now that it's done and I can sit in the gallery and talk to the artists whose lives it's changing, I get choked up, every time. When I sit in the Welcome Room and speak to guests and ask them about the experience, I get choked up. It's making a difference in the lives of guests, the artists, of society – and me," Zwickel continued. "It's incredibly gratifying. It changed my life."





(Jimmy Jeong for The Globe and Mail)

## IF YOU GO

Along with the aboriginal art, all Skwachays Lodge rooms are stocked with organic, fair-trade Spirit Bear Coffee; toiletries by aboriginal-owned Mother Earth Essentials; fluffy bathrobes; a refrigerator, microwave and coffee maker; and large plasma HDTVs with cable and Netflix. There's also Internet radio, free WiFi and free long-distance calling anywhere in North America. Rates start at \$179 for two double beds; \$189 for a queen. (29/31 West Pender St.; [skwachays.com](http://skwachays.com))

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/travel/destinations/guests-meet-aboriginal-artists-at-this-unique-vancouver-hotel/article23897147/>

## More rock, less folk, in Beatrice Deer's new album

**"I wanted to give them something fresh, but also in our language"**

DAVID MURPHY, April 14, 2015 – 3:55 pm



The Beatrice Deer Band released their latest album, *Fox*, in Montreal April 12. The album features Inuktitut and English lyrics, a little throat-singing, and even a song by Deer's auntie Louisa Kulula. (PHOTO BY DAVID MURPHY)

### *Special to Nunatsiaq News*

MONTREAL — It's been five long years since Beatrice Deer released any new music.

"Yeah... wow," Deer said with a giggle, sitting on a stool backstage at Club Balattou in Montreal.

"We gotta work on making those albums closer together," she says, laughing again.

The Beatrice Deer Band officially released their new EP, called *Fox*, April 12 in Montreal in front of about 40 fans and friends.

It's long overdue, says co-producer and bassist Mike Felber, joining Deer backstage after ending their show with covers of "Zombie" by The Cranberries and "Eye Of The Tiger" by Survivor.

"She moved from Quaqtaq and it had been four or five years and she's in Montreal meeting new musicians and nothing was coming out of it," Felber said.

"And there was even some funding there and it was kind of embarrassing," Felber said. Deer giggles, again.

But Deer, now 32, has nothing to be embarrassed about. The EP, entitled *Fox* is "urban Inuit" music, she says, and she thinks it's her best album yet.

*Fox* follows the 2010 self-titled album *Beatrice Deer*. Deer also has a Christmas album called *An Arctic Christmas* and a debut album from 2004 entitled *Just Bea*.

*Fox*, however, is a new sound for Deer. It's less folky and more indie-rock, with throat singing and traditional Inuit songs mixed in between.

Most songs are in Inuktitut but there are some English lyrics as well.

“I wanted the EP to be all in Inuktitut, but I also didn’t want to exclude [the] English speaking audience,” Deer said.

“But I also wanted to expose our language because most of our audience is Inuit. So I wanted to give them something fresh, but also in our language.”

Deer is particularly proud of the album because of how it was produced: she was more hands-on this time.

“It’s very different from my previous records because this time I had really great producers that I got to know more. Because my past producers, I wasn’t really familiar with them, and they weren’t really familiar with me,” Deer said.

“And I was not that experienced in recording so I just went along with whatever they were doing.”

Co-producers Felber and Johnny Griffin, who’s the primary songwriter, challenged Deer vocally, “Compared to the other albums, where I wasn’t really challenged,” she said.

She’s talking about sustaining some long, high-pitched notes like in the chorus of title track, “Fox.”

Deer actually opened the April 12 show in Montreal with the up-tempo, melodic, “Fox” which tells a story from Inuit legend.

“I took vocal lessons for this EP, which was a great learning experience. So I learnt a lot of stuff throughout this project.”

The album also includes softer, darker songs such as “Relocation,” some throat singing on “Competition” and a half-minute piece, “Pisiq” which features the voice of her auntie, Louisa Kulula.

“We didn’t plan that. I just asked [Kulula] to sing old songs that her mother used to sing, my grandmother, [who] I never knew,” Deer said.

“I just asked her to sing and I recorded her on my iPhone on a car ride home. During the EP production I wanted to just put it in.”

Listen closely and you can hear the hum of tires on pavement in the background. If you didn’t know, you might think it was a river.

The next goal for the band is sharing the album so that “everyone hears it in the world,” Felber said.

But they're really hoping to reach the North, Felber clarifies.

"It's orientated to the northern people. It's kind of herded to that crowd," he said.

Which is the way it should be, Felber said, because Deer is a success story through which others might learn, and be inspired.

"Things can get pretty dark up there sometimes," he said.

"And it would be nice for the kids up there to see what Beatrice has done and, you know, see her as a positive role model and spread a good message to the people of the North."

The Beatrice Deer Band plays next in Gatineau April 29 for Nunavut Sivuniksavut's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference at the Hilton Lac-Leamy.

In the meantime, you can buy the Beatrice Deer Band's *Fox* on iTunes [here](#).

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiagonline.ca/stories/article/65674more\\_rock\\_less\\_folk\\_in\\_beatrice\\_deers\\_new\\_album/](http://www.nunatsiagonline.ca/stories/article/65674more_rock_less_folk_in_beatrice_deers_new_album/)

## Indigenous Comix Month

Celebrating the incredible graphic novels and comics made by indigenous peoples

by [Perry King](#)

April 15, 2015

4:28 PM

April marks Indigenous Comix Month, and to celebrate [Ad Astra](#)'s Nicole Burton has compiled comics written and drawn by first nations artists from across the country.

From residential schools and Louis Riel to miners and seal hunts, the stories are dark, graphic, sometimes sexually explicit. She's also compiled reviews of works and feature interviews with indigenous creators, and released an original webcomic called DOGS, which is based off the Qikiqtani Truth Commission — which documented the life of Inuit from 1950 to 1975.

As the curator, Burton wants the work, and the artists, to set the tone and speak for itself.

“It’s not just about comic book histories of colonization, it’s about whatever indigenous creators want to talk about,” says Burton, a lifelong comics fan who founded Ad Astra in 2011. “We will all be amazed at how much there is to be said.”

Burton founded Ad Astra Comix to curate political comics and provide outlets for education and debate. They host pop-up shops and tables at local events, including the Toronto Comic Arts Festival, coming in May.

As Ad Astra gained more publishing opportunities, Burton wanted to place more focus on diversity, and in 2014, had been working with Blackfoot artist Jason Eaglespeaker on how to best promote his graphic novel *Uneducation: a Residential Schools Graphic Novel*.

Word of mouth has proven effective, and more artists have come forward to present their stories, representing various First Nations groups and stories.

“Most of the stories are coupled with stories of perseverance, of survival,” says Burton, describing the comics. “And the creators themselves are a testament to cultural survival.”

The creators include David Robertson, a Cree artist who has written and drawn several comics, including *Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story*, and *The Helen Betty Osborne Story*, a non-fiction tale about the abduction of a Cree woman in La Pas, Manitoba in 1971. Elizabeth LaPensée, an Anishinaabe/Métis/Irish graphic artist, is also featured; she creates video games and board games based on traditional indigenous knowledge and history.

Burton, Ad Astra and Indigenous Comix Month will also be featured in an upcoming episode of *Red Man Laughing*, a comedy podcast hosted by Anishinaabe/Metis comedian Ryan McMahon.

**Direct Link:** <https://nowtoronto.com/art-and-books/books/indigenous-comix-month/>

## **Aboriginal Community Development**

### **Life & Times: Elder honoured aboriginal culture helping others achieve sobriety**

**Francis Bad Eagle (Sept. 27, 1941 – Feb. 22, 2015)**

By Andrea Ross, Edmonton Journal April 12, 2015





Francis Bad Eagle lived in Edmonton for 40 years but hailed from the Piikani First Nation in southern Alberta.

EDMONTON – Francis Bad Eagle was the first person many aboriginal youth saw when they arrived in Edmonton.

He would be awaiting them at the downtown Greyhound bus station, eager to steer them towards a better life than he experienced in the early 1970s, arriving in Edmonton from the Piikani First Nation in southern Alberta.

So there he planted himself, every day for about 15 years, a cowboy hat covering two long braids, standing on bad knees for hours as the buses pulled up.

It was through helping others that he stayed sober for more than 40 years.

“He would never call himself an elder, but he’d say he was a helper,” Edmonton social worker Lise Robinson recalled.

“He said he just wanted to serve others. Without him, possibly many would have been lost in the city or fallen through the cracks.”

Bad Eagle died of a heart attack after collapsing in front of his apartment Feb. 22, 2015. He was 73 years old, and the last surviving child of a family of 12 children. He is survived by five generations of nieces and nephews.

At birth, Bad Eagle’s grandmother gave him the Blackfoot name Naamsksaskohmapii (Medicine Bundle Boy) in an ode to his father, a long-time holder of a medicine bundle pipe. Alongside his father and four brothers, Bad Eagle hosted many rodeos, powwows and feather games from 1956 to 1963 at the family’s southern Alberta homestead.

A tumble from a bull during a rodeo in the 1980s resulted in a persistent back injury and forced him away from the rodeo circuit. Bad Eagle was known to walk with a limp and

was missing a couple of fingers from other accidents during his rodeo days. But he maintained a piece of this past through his style, and was seldom seen without his blue jeans and cowboy hat.

Claire Ashton met Bad Eagle in 2005 as they worked together on the Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Initiative Project, aimed at strengthening relationships between the City of Edmonton administration and aboriginal communities.

She said his commitment to aboriginal culture saw him through some of his darkest days as an alcoholic. Ashton said she recalls him mentioning he was a residential school survivor, but he never dwelled on his past.

“He had a very rough time and lived a life that few of us could really imagine,” she said. “(But) he never spoke poorly of anyone, he never judged anyone. That’s what he wanted people to remember and emulate. Make good choices, walk in a good way, and don’t speak poorly of anyone.”

Bad Eagle’s commitment to sobriety was a passion he extended to the downtown community. He was actively involved in the Poundmakers Lodge addiction treatment centre in St. Albert, and started Strength and Hope, an Alcoholics Anonymous group in the basement of the Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples in 1976. These meetings started small, with 20 or 30 members attending, but eventually grew to around 200 members, Ashton said.

This same church was filled to capacity for his funeral at the end of February — a testament to the lives he touched within its walls, said Father Jim Holland, parish priest of Sacred Heart.

“He had a heart of gold and loved to help others, because he was helped and knew what receiving help could do,” Father Jim said. “He had an affect on a lot of people, and it showed. He would give his heart to anyone.”

Bad Eagle’s Strength and Hope meetings will continue in his name, Holland said.

Jerry Wood first met Bad Eagle at an AA meeting at the Poundmakers Lodge. The two became good friends over the years, but that first meeting was a memorable one, he said.

“I didn’t know where to go in the complex, and I saw this elderly gentleman in a cowboy hat and belt buckle and I asked him to guide me. I started speaking Cree to him, and he was quite insulted,” Wood said. “He turned around and said, ‘I don’t speak Cree,’ and took off.

“He didn’t keep his tongue in his back pocket.”

Wood said he always admired his friend’s commitment to staying sober, especially when faced with so much temptation in the inner city community. And despite his aging knees

and signature limp, Bad Eagle insisted on walking everywhere, and still enjoyed powwow dancing into his later years.

Wood was looking forward to taking him to his first-ever Sun Dance this summer on the Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation. A communal thanksgiving for what the Creator has given the community, it's one of the most powerful and difficult ceremonies in aboriginal culture, and the men were excited to participate in the four-day event.

"I think it would have been good for him to witness, but he will be sorely missed by all the people he impacted," Wood said. "I was told by my mentor there are a lot of people from the spirit world who come to witness the Sun Dance.

"I'm sure he will be there in spirit."

**Direct Link:**

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Life+Times+Elder+honoured+aboriginal+culture+helping+others+achieve+sobriety/10962690/story.html>

## **Michael Den Tandt: Why Canada should abolish the Indian Act and reserve system**

[Michael Den Tandt](#) | April 13, 2015 9:03 AM ET



The Northern Ontario reserve of Kashechewan is seen in this undated handout aerial photo. The reserve system, knit together under the 1876 Indian Act, is an explicitly racist construction, one that holds 'Indians' to be little more than children, writes Michael Den Tandt.

Should a national public inquiry be convened to shine a klieg light on the plight of missing and murdered indigenous women? Absolutely. But let there be no flinching from the result, wherever it may lead — even if that is a final indictment of the parlous reserve system itself, and a concerted push to abolish the Indian Act, appalling racist relic that it is, once and for all.

RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson caused a stir Friday with the release of a letter, addressed to Grand Chief Bernice Martial of the Treaty No. 6 Nations, in which he confirmed the obvious: The majority of convicted murderers of aboriginal women, 70 per cent, are aboriginal men. Similar statistics gathered from among the non-aboriginal population, or any population, will reveal a similar ratio. That's because violence against women and children is typically perpetrated by spouses and parents. As with child sexual abuse, the bugaboo of the stranger assailant is most often a construct. The far greater risk statistically is of an assault by a family member.

Paulson's letter was viewed among advocates for an inquiry, whose pleas the Harper government has ignored for months, as an unsubtle plug for the status quo. But there is another way to view the statistic. If it can put to rest the simplistic fiction that violence against aboriginal women is mostly perpetrated by strangers, in contradiction of all the available evidence, then it is helpful.

For at the end of all the investigating there will still be this incontrovertible fact: Though aboriginal women make up just 4.3 per cent of the population, 718,500 individuals based on the 2011 National Household Survey, they accounted for 16 per cent of the 6,551 female homicides recorded in Canada between 1980 and 2012 (which is 32 per cent of total homicides over that period). These figures were highlighted in the RCMP's report, *Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview*, released in the spring of 2014.

So there is, in fact, a scourge of violence against indigenous women in Canada, and it is hugely disproportionate. But this doesn't apply just to women and girls, but to the entire indigenous population. In a widely quoted essay in 2006, "Aboriginal Victimization in Canada: A summary of the Literature," Justice Department researcher Katie Scrim found aboriginal Canadians were three times more likely to be victims of violent crime than non-aboriginals.

In some populations that figure is low: While digging through data from the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics during a visit to the territory in 2013, I was shocked to find that between 1999 and 2011 the territorial homicide rate had doubled; it was more than 12 times the national average; and Nunavut's suicide rate is 10 times the national average. This is an epidemic, one that makes a mockery of every pleasant-sounding bit of government-sponsored Pablum about inclusion, growth and progress in the far north.

In her essay, Scrim identified five factors that were linked with an "elevated risk of offending and/or victimization" among aboriginal Canadians. These should surprise no one. They are youth, living in a single-parent home, living common-law, high unemployment and the consumption of alcohol. In other words, the same factors that correspond to higher-than-normal rates of violence in every population everywhere, worldwide.

To take a leap now to root causes: It's a fact education on aboriginal reserves is underfunded per capita and desperately inadequate, in degrees that vary region by region.

In 2011, the on-reserve high school graduation rate was 35.5 per cent, compared with nearly 80 per cent for Canadians as a whole. It is a fact, as auditor general reports and infinitum have shown, that living conditions, employment opportunities and basic living standards on many reserves are so awful as to be inconceivable anywhere else in Canada.

It is equally true that the reserve system itself, knit together under the 1876 Indian Act, is an explicitly racist construction, holding “Indians” to be little more than children; that many reserves are set in barren, remote locations that make them economically unviable; and that the system still denies most on-reserve people the right to own their homes, which is the primary means of wealth creation and preservation for middle-class people everywhere.

Add to that a thoroughly dysfunctional governance regime, another relic of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and you have a recipe for permanent inter-generational inequality and misery, along racial lines — apartheid, in all but name.

Redress is not a matter of a report and recommendations followed by a headline or two. Settling outstanding land claims in anything like a timely manner will require unshakable political will and cost billions. Abolition of the reserve system would have to be a long-term national project, with grandfathering to protect the most vulnerable. The Harper government has no appetite for this, clearly. Does the country?

Some Canadians would like to think so. Our collective, shameful record of stagnation and apathy on this file, year after year, suggests otherwise.

**Direct Link:** <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/canada-should-abolish-the-indian-act-and-reserve-system>

## **Winnipeg police serve annual feast at Métis friendship centre**

**More than 600 turn up to 19<sup>th</sup> annual spring feast served by Winnipeg police, RCMP**

By Teghan Beaudette, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 15, 2015 9:02 AM CT Last Updated: Apr 15, 2015 4:52 PM CT

Police officers from across Manitoba gathered in Winnipeg Wednesday afternoon to serve lunch to more than 600 people from Winnipeg’s North End.

Officers from the Winnipeg Police Service, RCMP, the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National and Treaty three departments were all on hand to dole out hot bowls of stew, fresh bread and a little cake.





A young girl reaches for her friend's stew at the Spring Feast in Winnipeg's North End on Wednesday. (Teghan Beaudette/CBC)

Winnipeg police Chief Devon Clunis was there posing for selfies with teenage girls and shaking hands with young kids. He said relations between police and community members are good right now, and events like these are important to keep it that way.

"Philosophically, I tell officers, park your car and just get out and spend time – even if you see kids out for recess, just be continuously engaged with the community," he said. "This is an ongoing process for us."

The annual spring feast is part of a wider effort to build relationships between officers and the city's aboriginal community and is modeled after an aboriginal tradition in which the peacekeepers and warriors of a tribe would provide and prepare food to honour the community.

Wednesday's lunch had a grand entry and hoop dancing, as well as a blessing from an aboriginal elder.



An officer leans in to hear from a young hoop dancer at the Spring Feast on Wednesday in Winnipeg. (Teghan Beaudette/CBC)

Every year, the event attracts about 600 people – a long way from its humble beginnings 19 years ago.

Retired police officer Willy Ducharme founded the event with his partner after working with aboriginal elders to find a way for police officers and the community to come together.

“It’s fantastic that it’s lasted this long, and I think as long as the will is there, the people will come,” said Ducharme.

He worked on the Winnipeg police force for 30 years, and hasn’t missed a single spring feast since they started.

“It goes to show that police men and police women are human – and as much as they have duties, everybody is treated equally,” he said.

The events have also slowly added more traditional aspects. The first few years were pork and turkey. Now, bison stew and other more traditional foods are offered.

“I would’ve always liked to have served a muskrat meal for the spring feast, but where am I going to get that many muskrats?” said Ducharme, laughing. “And who’s going to come if I say I’m serving muskrat?”



Winnipeg Police Chief Devon Clunis greets some of the younger attendees of the 19<sup>th</sup> spring feast at the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre in Winnipeg on Wednesday. (Teghan Beaudette/CBC)

Sue Mozdzen came down for the meal on Wednesday. She works at Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc. nearby, and said it’s good for young community members to see police in a different light.

“Maybe if you’re a child, and you have something scary happen, one day you might be comfortable approaching a police officer,” she said.

And even though she's not a kid anymore, the novelty of having a uniformed officer serve her lunch hasn't worn off yet.

"It's kind of a different experience to be served by a police officer wearing a uniform. It's like, 'Wow. Neat,'" she said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-police-serve-annual-feast-at-m%C3%A9tis-friendship-centre-1.3033850>

## Mistissini plans single funeral for Cree hunters who died in cabin fire

**Funeral date can't be set until coroner completes identification process**

By Christopher Herodier, Susan Bell, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 16, 2015 11:41 AM CT  
Last Updated: Apr 16, 2015 11:41 AM CT

The families and friends of five hunters [who died in a cabin fire](#) near the Cree community of Mistissini, Que., earlier this month gathered Wednesday to begin the difficult process of arranging a funeral.

"We want them to have all five funerals on (the) same day. Since they all left together," said Jason Coonishish, who lost his son Chiiwetan Coonishish and his brother Emmett Coonishish in the fire.



An interfaith service was held April 7 at Bussy Lake, where five hunters from the Cree community of Mistissini, Que., died in a cabin fire. Funerals are being planned for next week. (submitted by Jason Coonishish)

“The other families were happy with that decision we made as group.”

A single funeral will be held in memory of all five hunters.

Chiiwetin Coonishish, Emmett Coonishish, Charlie Gunner, Kevin Loon and David Jimiken were expected back from a hunting trip to Chiask-uusthoon (Bussy Lake) on March 30. A search began when the hunters did not return.

Two days later, a search plane found the ruins of the cabin devastated by fire.

Jason Coonishish was on the plane.

“I recognized all the Ski-Doos,” he said of the scene he and the pilot found, when flying over the cabin.

“It’s been very hard for me. I knew it was going to be even harder to come back to Mistissini and tell the news to my wife, my father and the other members of the family.

“(When the plane returned) everyone was waiting at the water’s edge. My wife fell to the ice and I had to help her get back up.”

## **Waiting for autopsy results**

Organizing the funeral for the five men is a task made more difficult because of the wait for autopsy results.

“We still need to have closure, and we’re just waiting for the DNA and the coroner’s report,” said Coonishish.

Two of the five bodies have still not been positively identified. The coroner says identification won’t happen until sometime next week, so the date for the funeral has not yet been set.

“It will really help to be able to hold funerals. After that we will to work toward putting in place better precautions to protect our hunters in the future,” said Coonishish.

Coonishish said one of the things being planned is the installation of smoke detectors in hunting cabins.

## **Memorial service already held at site**

An interfaith memorial service was held April 7 at the Bussy Lake site of the fire. Family and friends of the men headed there on 40 Ski-Doos. Coonishish says that service has helped the community a lot.

“It was good that all beliefs were honoured, with the tobacco ties being put down and hung on the trees, and also the cross of Christian faith being erected to honour our young men,” said Coonishish.

“Many of the tobacco ties were made by those who were not able to be there, but still, they prayed with us from wherever they were.”

Each family has chosen a spokesperson who will speak at the funeral, said Coonishish.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/mistissini-plans-single-funeral-for-cree-hunters-who-died-in-cabin-fire-1.3035586>

## **First Nations in Ontario get \$1.4M to improve emergency management**

**Federal funding announcement comes ahead of spring flooding season on James Bay Coast**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 16, 2015 11:21 AM ET Last Updated: Apr 16, 2015 11:21 AM ET



Ottawa announced it has provided Ontario First Nations \$1.4M to assist with emergency management. It comes just ahead of the spring break up, which floods and threatens the remote Kashechewan First Nation annually. (Supplied by Charlie Angus)

Ahead of the spring flooding season on the James Bay Coast, the federal government announced it had provided \$1.4 million to help First Nations communities in Ontario with emergency management.

The funds, which went to the Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation (OFNTSC), were intended to help First Nations members develop, update and test



community emergency management plans, as well as hire and train First Nation members to work with their communities on emergency preparedness. The government made the announcement in a press release on Wednesday.

The OFNTSC provides expert technical advisory services to many First Nations in the province.

The announcement comes as communities on the James Bay Coast prepare for the spring break up — an event that often leads to the evacuation of entire First Nations communities.

Kashechewan is one of those communities. It's been [raising concerns](#) about the structural integrity of a dike meant to protect the remote community during spring flooding. It cites an engineering report published in February that said the deteriorating condition of the dike is an "intolerable risk."

The chief of the Kashechewan First Nation recently called on Ottawa to find a solution to end the annual spring flooding that threatens the community.

## **Providing comparable emergency aid**

A request for information about what is being done to address the community's concerns was not immediately returned by the office of Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt.

The \$1.4 million in funding came from the \$19.1 million announced by Valcourt in November 2013 as part of the government's approach to emergency management on reserves.

According to the release, discussions are currently underway between Aboriginal Affairs and provincial and territorial governments across Canada to provide First Nation communities with access to comparable emergency assistance available elsewhere in their province or territory.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/first-nations-in-ontario-get-1-4m-to-improve-emergency-management-1.3035603>

## **Aboriginal teen assaulted while in Winnipeg foster care taken off life support**

WINNIPEG — The Canadian Press

Published Wednesday, Apr. 15 2015, 9:47 PM EDT

Last updated Wednesday, Apr. 15 2015, 9:49 PM EDT

A 15-year-old Winnipeg girl who was seriously assaulted while in government care has been taken off life support.

Derek Nepinak, chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, says the girl's family gathered at the hospital and made the agonizing decision Wednesday.

He says the family was at her bedside and has asked for privacy.

The girl was beaten and left for dead at a parkade in downtown Winnipeg on April 1.

Police charged a 15-year-old boy with aggravated assault and aggravated sexual assault.

Both teens were in foster care and were being housed in the same downtown hotel.

"They are at her bedside now in a heartbreaking situation," Nepinak said Wednesday night.

The attack prompted Manitoba Family Services Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross to promise to stop housing foster children in hotels by June 1.

Manitoba has about 10,000 children in care. The vast majority are aboriginal. On any given day, dozens of those children are put up in hotels because there isn't room in a foster or group home.

The provincial government has been under fire for housing foster children in hotels for 15 years.

Manitoba's Children's Advocate has released several critical reports about the practice since 2000, urging the government to find better alternatives.

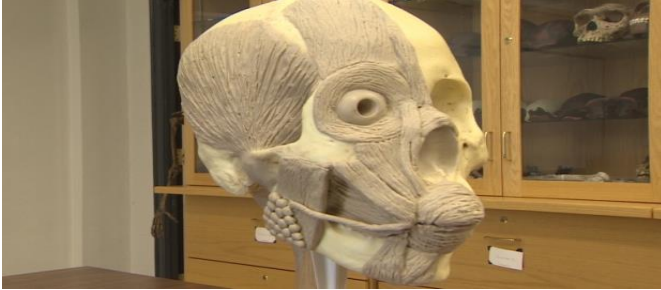
**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/aboriginal-teen-assaulted-while-in-winnipeg-foster-care-taken-off-life-support/article23982137/>

## **Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement**

### **Nova Scotia research aims to identify aboriginal remains**

## **Plenty of tissue data for those of white European, African and Hispanic descent, none for Canadian aboriginals**

By Richard Cuthbertson, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 10, 2015 7:23 PM AT Last Updated: Apr 10, 2015 10:11 PM AT



Investigators sometimes turn to the painstaking process of making a 3-D facial reconstruction. (CBC)

New research out of Nova Scotia aims to put a face and name to the unidentified remains of aboriginal people found across Canada by investigating a long overlooked area of forensic research.

When human remains are found in the province, Tanya Peckmann, a forensic anthropologist at Saint Mary's University, often gets called to the scene. She and her team remove the bones, figure out age, ethnic background and other markers – all information that is turned over to police who begin the search for identify.

But when years pass and all avenues of identification fail, investigators sometimes turn to the painstaking process of making a 3-D facial reconstruction.

When the clay head is made public, it's hoped someone will recognize the dead.

One of the most important things to understand in the process is tissue depth, which varies with age, but also with ethnic background.



The RCMP forensic specialist crafted facial reconstruction of Donna Jo. (CBC)

The problem is that while there's a great deal of tissue data for people of white European, African and Hispanic descent, none exists for Canadian aboriginals.

"That person is not going to look like they did during life, because you're using tissue depths that aren't representative of that population," Peckmann says.

"And the whole point of this process is to identify these people and give them a name and give them back to their family members and let the family be able to know what happened to them."

For instance, when the remains of an aboriginal woman were found in 1992 near the St. John River in New Brunswick, an RCMP forensic specialist carefully crafted a facial reconstruction.

But with no data on tissue depth for aboriginal people, the specialist had to use what he knew about Caucasian skin.

Essentially it came down to guess work.



When a 1984 photo of her finally emerged, it was clear the forensic reconstruction had depicted a slimmer face than Joe's when she was alive. (CBC)

It took more than a decade to finally identify Donna Joe, originally from Burnt Church, N.B.

When a 1984 photo of her finally emerged, it was clear the forensic reconstruction had depicted a slimmer face than Joe's when she was alive.

But now, after several years of research, sponsored in part by RCMP, scientists have analyzed tissue depth of 152 Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia.

A portable ultrasound was used to measure tissue thickness at 19 points on each volunteer, most of them from Eskasoni First Nation in Cape Breton.

The result: the first database of aboriginal tissue depth in Canada, which shows Mi'kmaq people have more tissue depth in their cheeks, noses and chins.

Part of the impetus for the research is the high number of murdered and missing aboriginal women in Canada.

## **600 unidentified remains**

There are roughly 600 unidentified remains across Canada, some of them aboriginal. The president of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association says she hopes the new research will help identify those unsolved cases.



“When we see scientists and researchers looking at things that will help us deal with the problem of missing, murdered women, it has to be commended and applauded,” says Cheryl Maloney.

“And the fact that they spent this much time on Mi’kmaq, and the research on the Mi’kmaq people and their distinct characteristics is wonderful. I think it’s long overdue.”

But it doesn’t mean there’s not doubters. Peckmann says one anonymous academic who reviewed the study before publication questioned what the point of the was.

“It just blew me away that somebody would say ‘what does it matter?,’” Peckmann says. “But again it brings it back almost to the the way that aboriginal people are probably viewed.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/nova-scotia-research-aims-to-identify-aboriginal-remains-1.3028778>

## **Demonstrators at Yukon RCMP headquarters protest ‘police brutality’**

**First Nations chief meets with police, says ‘things have to change’**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 10, 2015 4:47 PM CT Last Updated: Apr 11, 2015 10:21 AM CT



More than 50 protesters, many of them Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation members, gathered outside Whitehorse RCMP headquarters on Friday. (Cheryl Kawaja/CBC)

More than 50 people gathered outside Yukon RCMP headquarters in Whitehorse this afternoon to protest what many were calling “police brutality”.

The demonstration came in the wake of a viral video that showed a Yukon First Nations man being pinned to the ground and punched by an RCMP officer during an arrest last weekend. The video was posted on Facebook and within days had been seen by nearly 850,000 people. RCMP responded by calling for a [third-party investigation](#).

“I was actually enraged,” says protester Hayley Mintz about seeing the video. “He’s a good friend of mine and he’s not a bad guy.”

The demonstrators gathered on the lawn and sidewalk in front of the RCMP building. Some were drumming and chanting, while others stood quietly, holding placards. “Am I next?” read one sign. Another read: “No more police brutality.”

“We teach our children to look to the RCMP for safety, now I have issues,” says protester Jackie Bear. “I support anybody and everybody who’s been hurt by the RCMP. It’s just wrong.”



Inspector Archie Thompson talks to reporters at a protest outside RCMP headquarters in Whitehorse. (Cheryl Kawaja/CBC)

Whitehorse RCMP Inspector Archie Thompson came out during the protest to speak to reporters. He said police respect the protesters’ rights to demonstrate, and are taking their concerns very seriously.

“It’s not okay to use more force than is necessary to do our duty,” Thompson said. But he said it’s important to allow the investigation to proceed, before drawing conclusions about the officer’s conduct.

“I know our members have worked for years to build relationships, and I would hate to see one incident compromise that,” Thompson said.

## **‘Things have to change’**

The man arrested in the video, Josh Skookum, is from the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation. His father, Ed Skookum, was among the protesters, along with Little Salmon Carmacks chief Eric Fairclough.

“Things have to change,” Fairclough said. During the protest, he went inside the RCMP building to speak to police about the protesters’ concerns. He left feeling reassured.



Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation chief Eric Fairclough. (Cheryl Kawaja/CBC)

“I expressed that people want to see some action by the RCMP to make improvements to the relationship between them and the First Nations people,” Fairclough said. “They [police] do want to work on improving relations and they want to get to the bottom of it too.”

Fairclough says he was told the independent investigation into Josh Skookum’s arrest would begin next week. The Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) has been called in by RCMP to lead the investigation, as an impartial third-party. In the meantime, RCMP say the arresting officer shown in the video has been reassigned to administrative duties.

A statement from ASIRT says it is working with RCMP and the Yukon government to appoint a community liaison, to act as an impartial observer to the investigation. Fairclough says he offered police the names of several possible candidates.

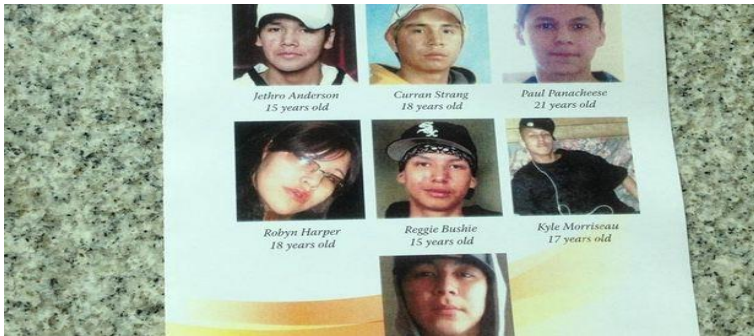
“There needs to be improvement here in the Yukon,” Fairclough said. “Thank goodness for modern technology that can capture these things.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/demonstrators-at-yukon-rcmp-headquarters-protest-police-brutality-1.3028649>

## **First Nations student deaths ‘treated woefully inadequately,’ lawyer says**

**Coroner to decide whether Thunder Bay police investigation will be examined at inquest**

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 15, 2015 8:00 AM ET Last Updated: Apr 15, 2015 8:00 AM ET



Nishnawbe Aski Nation is distributing the photos and short biographies of the seven students who died in Thunder Bay while attending high school. (Jody Porter/CBC)

An inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations students in Thunder Bay must examine the actions of the city's police service, says a lawyer representing the Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

"On anybody's analysis, these cases were treated in a woefully inadequate way," Julian Falconer said outside the Thunder Bay courthouse on Tuesday where he was making arguments about the scope of the upcoming inquest.

The seven First Nation students — Jethro Anderson, 15, Curran Strang, 18, Paul Panacheese, 19, Robyn Harper, 18, Reggie Bushie, 15, Kyle Morrisseau, 17 and Jordan Wabasse, 15 — all died in Thunder Bay. Anderson was the first to die in 2000. Wabasse died in 2011.

Presiding coroner Dr. David Eden said the inquest is about safety and "prevention of deaths of First Nations youth who must live off reserve to attend high school."

The lawyer representing Thunder Bay police and the police services board argued that singling out police for additional scrutiny during the inquest would be unfair.



Lawyer Julian Falconer, who is representing the Nishnawbe Aski Nation says an inquest needs to examine why the Thunder Bay police didn't do more to investigate the deaths of First Nations students. (CBC)

"The reality here is that on a repeated basis these youth were not reported missing in a timely way," Brian Gover said.

If the police investigations are up for questioning at the inquest it also “ought to include steps taken by others to investigate and their decisions to delay reporting to police,” Gover said.

One of the students, Kyle Morriseau, was missing for 13 days before he was found dead, Falconer said in his submissions. Gover countered by saying police were not notified of his disappearance for two days.

“It may be determined that Kyle Morriseau died before police even knew he was missing,” Gover said. “It’s a familiar theme.”

Falconer told the coroner he was offended by that argument.



Lawyer Brian Gover, who is representing the Thunder Bay police and the police board says students often weren’t reported missing in a timely way. (CBC)

“When Kyle Morriseau was reported missing [police] had a real obligation to hunt for that child,” Falconer said. “Telling us later that he might have died already is offensive.”

The lawyer representing the families of the students who died said they are expecting a full examination of the police actions as well as the role that racism played in the deaths of their children. If those issues aren’t addressed, Christa Big Canoe said families will question the value of an inquest.

“There is a genuine fear of future loss,” Big Canoe said of families who are keeping their teens at home, instead of sending them to the city for high school.

After a full day of submissions from all seven parties with standing at the inquest, Eden reserved his decision on the scope. He’s expected to make it soon.

The inquest is expected to begin in the fall.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-student-deaths-treated-woefully-inadequately-lawyer-says-1.3033032>



# Manitoba Justice refuses to help with funeral for slain aboriginal woman

**‘They just stomped on us. That’s how I feel. They just stomped on her’**

By Joanne Levasseur, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 15, 2015 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Apr 15, 2015 7:03 PM ET

A grieving mother in British Columbia is struggling to understand why the Province of Manitoba has refused to help pay for her slain daughter’s funeral.

Janett Poorman’s daughter Angela, 29, was stabbed to death on Dec. 14, 2014. Hers is one of 230 “missing and murdered” indigenous women’s cases CBC found that remain unsolved.

Poorman had asked Manitoba’s Compensation for Victims of Crime program for help, and she was denied because of her daughter’s past criminal record.



Angela Poorman, 29, was stabbed to death on Dec. 14, 2014. Her case is one of 230 missing and murdered indigenous women’s cases CBC found that remain unsolved.

“They just stomped on us,” said Poorman from her Burnaby, B.C., home. “That’s how I feel. They just stomped on her.”

Less than a month after her daughter’s death, Poorman found she is on the hook for the \$4,500 funeral bill.



‘How is it her victimization — in this case homicide — is outweighed by the minor offences that exist on her criminal record?’ - *Christa Big Canoe*

Poorman submitted an application for the funeral costs under Manitoba’s compensation for victims of crime program.

That application was rejected, and the victims services employee dissuaded the family from filing an appeal, saying there was no point in trying.

Under the province’s Victims’ Bill of Rights, family members who have to pay the victim’s funeral costs are eligible for up to \$5,400. The amount may be reduced if the victim was convicted of an offence in the past five years.

## **Victim’s offences a sign of poverty**

In Angela’s case, she had 10 convictions, the majority of which were breaching her conditions of release. Her original convictions were one count of driving while impaired and one count of identity theft for which she was fined and put on probation.

“The types of offences on her criminal record are those of someone who was experiencing poverty and are not uncommon to people who have a lower socio-economic status in society,” said Christa Big Canoe, legal advocacy director at Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto.



Janett Poorman looks over the rejection letter she received from Manitoba Justice. She applied to have her murdered daughter’s funeral covered by the Compensation for Victims of Crime Program. (CBC)

“How is it her victimization — in this case homicide — is outweighed by the minor offences that exist on her criminal record?”

Big Canoe points out the province had a choice when it denied Poorman’s application. The Victims’ Bill of Rights says “the director may ... deny or reduce the amount of compensation payable.”

That means there is wiggle room, Big Canoe says, because “when the word ‘may’ is used, it means there is discretion, so this is a policy choice or a directive.”

The Victims' Bill of Rights was changed in 2011 to allow for the exclusion of people with recent minor criminal convictions. At the time, the intent was to quell criticism that criminals were getting benefits as a result of injuries sustained in the commission of crimes.

"The intent of the law is that there is no discretion for the victims' services office, but there is the appeals process and the director can then take another look at it," said Rachel Morgan, a government spokesperson.

## **Aboriginal people shut out**

Manitoba's victim compensation laws end up excluding a large number of aboriginal people by virtue of their over-representation in the criminal justice system, Big Canoe said.



Christa Big Canoe says compassionate grounds or exceptions should be built in to our victim compensation laws. (CBC)

In the past five years of available data, the amount paid out per year in victim compensation has gone from a high of \$3.9 million in 2009-10 to \$3.3 million in 2013-14.

"There is a consideration tax dollars should not be spent on criminals and there is no space or means for compassionate grounds or exceptions," she added. "Those are the things that should be built in that are lacking."

Poorman can't understand why the province would deny her burial costs after she has been through so much.

"I just don't understand their laws," she said. "I just don't know how they can treat people like this."

The province issued a statement which said Poorman may be entitled to compensation from its Employment and Income Assistance department for the funeral expenses and that EIA staff have been trying to contact her in order to provide payment.

Poorman says her numerous phone calls to EIA haven't been returned since February.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/iteam/manitoba-justice-refuses-to-help-with-funeral-for-slain-aboriginal-woman-1.3033253>

## Aboriginal Education & Youth

### White Bear Education Complex aims to reclaim indigenous languages

Lynne Bell / Carlyle Observer  
April 10, 2015 01:01 AM



White Bear Education Complex's Cultural Advisor, Josh Kakakeway is pictured with some young drummers during a visit to the school by the Treaty 4 Education Alliance, Wednesday, March 25, as part of the Alliance's Indigenous Language Initiative. Photo: Submitted

As part of her vision-and that of her community-to implement a strong Indigenous Language Program at White Bear Education Complex, Principal Sheri McArthur-Cappo welcomed the Treaty 4 Education Alliance (T4EA) to WBEC on Wednesday, March 25, where representatives worked with students, as part of a program designed to reclaim their community's languages.

Although there are four First Nation languages represented at White Bear-Cree, Nakota, Saulteaux, and Sioux-the school started the program concentrating on Cree.

"The Cree Language Program has been implemented throughout Kindergarten to grade seven," says McArthur-Cappo. "However, I'm looking forward to developing the other language programs here at White Bear Education Complex, too."

“The languages will include Saulteaux, Nakota, and Sioux. I’m planning to initiate these other language programs in the fall of 2015,” she says. “I’m also looking forward to offering the language program as a credit class for high school students.”

White Bear has embraced the project, says T4EA consultant, Megaen Reader. “Although the project is aimed at Kindergarten students, students from grades K to eight all participated in presenting a song, a prayer, and a story (in Cree).”

Reader says the project comes out of consultation with elders from the 11 First Nations schools that the T4EA represents.

“The consultations revealed that communities thought more culture and language needed to be taught in schools,” says Reader.

During the March 25 visit to WBEC, students were challenged to learn a song, a prayer, and a story in Cree.

Reader and videographer Paul Lang met with WBEC students, elders, and language instructors. The team recorded the students and language instructors performing the song, prayer, and story chosen by the school. These recordings are used to create resources that the students and the wider White Bear community can use to practice their language skills. These recordings will be made available on iPads as well as on the T4EA website.

Interviews with Elder Nora Kakakaway and fellow elders and language teachers, Josh and Madeline Kakakeway were also recorded, in order to capture their views on the importance of learning and reclaiming traditional languages.

The team also observed a lesson taught to grade three by teacher Brittney Wiley, and Reader says, “They were all very eager and enthusiastic to show off their Cree. The grade seven students we talked to also revealed the same thing, about learning the language.”

“The students said it made them proud to learn Cree and to be able to speak it with their families,” adds Reader.

“Once the students learn the song, prayer, and story, they are tasked with teaching their families and other members of the school and community. The hope is by starting early as spark will be ignited to learn their own language, and will continue throughout their lives.”

See more at: <http://www.carlyleobserver.com/news/local-news/white-bear-education-complex-aims-to-reclaim-indigenous-languages-1.1817206#sthash.ZxPAEoyk.dpuf>

## **Okanagan School District Raises Awareness About Aboriginal History**

posted April 13, 2015 by [Anita Sthankiya](#)

A new aboriginal agreement has been reached between the Okanagan Skaha School District (SD 67) and the provincial government.

The new agreement is the district's second Aboriginal Educational Enhancement Agreement and the result of two years of dialogue and consultation with students, parents, district staff members, and members of the Aboriginal Education Council (AEC).



The signing of the Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement in Penticton (Photo Credit: [Ginny Manning/ SD67 School Trustee](#))

“The second Aboriginal Educational Enhancement Agreement honours the Four Food Chiefs and supports the goals of raising cultural awareness, promoting a sense of belonging, fostering relationships and increasing educational success for all of our Aboriginal students,” said Linda Van Alphen, board chair. The agreement is a result of hard work and dedication from all the partners of the Aboriginal Education Council and many members of focus groups.”

The agreement aims to raise awareness and understanding of Aboriginal history, traditions, and culture for all students and staff in SD 67. Officials hope to increase Aboriginal students' sense of belonging, including sense of place, personal and cultural identity, and self-esteem in a caring, safe and inclusive environment.

Finally, the agreement aims to nurture and foster relationships between the school district and Aboriginal families, communities, and organizations. The second agreement builds on the first, which focused on student achievement under goals from the AEC.



**Direct Link:**

[http://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/South\\_Okanagan/15/04/13/Okanagan\\_School\\_District\\_Raises\\_Awareness\\_About\\_Aboriginal\\_History](http://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/South_Okanagan/15/04/13/Okanagan_School_District_Raises_Awareness_About_Aboriginal_History)

## **First Nations children learn language and culture outdoors**

**Aboriginal Head Start program Under One Sky offers new preschool program in Fredericton**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 14, 2015 12:32 PM AT Last Updated: Apr 14, 2015 12:32 PM AT

Some aboriginal children in Fredericton are learning about traditional Maliseet language and culture in a new outdoor preschool program.

“I saw a Mihku,” says four-year-old Maia Okoye, explaining that’s the Maliseet word for squirrel. She can also imitate the animal’s chatter.



Moon Joyce, Peyton Saulis, 3, and Candy Paul, trek through Odell Park as part of an outdoor preschool program. Titan Solomon, 3, and Mary Palmater follow behind. (CBC)

Maia is one of a half dozen three- and four-year-olds who spend two afternoons a week playing and learning in Odell Park. A group of six two- and-three year olds meets on two mornings. They do things like climb trees, snowshoe, go sliding, and sit around a campfire.

“The children do the leading,” says project manager Moon Joyce. “It’s their curiosity.”



The Take it Outside learning project is part of the Aboriginal Head Start program Under One Sky.

Joyce says executive director Patsy McKinney helped come up with the idea.

“She grew up in northern New Brunswick — Eel River Bar — and she just remembered what it was like as a child to be outdoors and to do your learning outdoors and to listen to her language being spoken among her granny and aunts. And she wanted these children to have an opportunity to get back to their roots.”



Preschoolers trek through Odell Park with guides from an Under One Sky Aboriginal Head Start program. (CBC)

Joyce says a lot of language and culture is embedded on the land. The children are learning the words for the animals and other parts of the natural environment and interacting with them.

“The trees in this culture are referred to as standing people and so now they understand the relationship between themselves and the trees all around them that give oxygen for us to breathe,” she says.

When the program started in September the children weren’t quite sure what to do outdoors, says Joyce, but now they arrive smiling and are excited to get into the woods to their favourite climbing trees another spots.

They’ve also built a lot of resilience, she says.

“Walking in the soft snow now they’re falling a lot, but they just roll — they just run with it, you know. They get up again and just keep on going. No tears.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/first-nations-children-learn-language-and-culture-outdoors-1.3026332>

## Aboriginal Health

### Ottawa to provide money to First Nations for prescription drug abuse treatment

The Canadian Press Posted: Apr 14, 2015 3:07 PM CT Last Updated: Apr 14, 2015 3:07 PM CT



The Health Minister says the federal government plans on putting \$13.5 million toward on-reserve support programs.

The federal government says it will do more to help First Nations provide treatment for prescription drug addiction.

Health Minister Rona Ambrose says Ottawa plans to spend \$13.5 million over the next five years for on-reserve support programs.

Ambrose made the announcement before touring the All Nations Healing Hospital in Fort Qu'Appelle, Sask., near Regina.

Ambrose said prescription drug abuse is a significant health and safety concern in North America.

Saskatchewan First Nations and partners are to receive more than \$2.6 million of the funding.

Part of the money is to go toward a crisis intervention team to be co-ordinated through two regional hubs — one in Saskatchewan and one in Manitoba.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/ottawa-to-provide-money-to-first-nations-for-prescription-drug-abuse-treatment-1.3032954>

## Aboriginal Identity & Representation

### Three indigenous languages still spoken in Canada included in major study



Gary Humchitt, right, of the Kwakiutl First Nation in Fort Rupert, B.C., and Shawn Edenshaw, left, of the Haida First Nation, wear traditional carvings on their heads while waiting to take part in the Walk for Reconciliation in Vancouver, B.C., on Sunday September 22, 2013. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Darryl Dyck

The Canadian Press

Published Sunday, April 12, 2015 1:06PM EDT

Three indigenous languages still spoken in Canada are among a group being studied as researchers attempt to understand how children around the world learn their vastly different mother tongues.

The global project – spearheaded by the University of Zurich – is looking at Dene, East Cree, and Inuktitut among 10 languages.

Researchers already know that children have little problem learning to speak their native language. What's not well understood is exactly how this happens.

“We’re trying to get a real sense of how children can acquire or learn any language in the world,” Dagmar Jung, a senior researcher from the University of Zurich, said in an interview.

“It’s a miracle that any child can actually learn any language it’s exposed to when it’s young.”

As part of the study, Jung and Olga Lovick, an associate linguistics professor at the First Nations University of Canada, were heading to the Clearwater River Dene Nation in northern Saskatchewan on Sunday.

It's one of only three places in the world where children grow up speaking Dene.

About 7,000 languages are spoken around the world but most research to date has focused on the structurally similar large European languages.

"The question is how do kids go about learning a language that is structurally so different as Dene?" Jung said from Regina.

Jung, who plans an initial two-month stay with the Clearwater River Dene, and Lovick plan to train community members to record children of two or three years old and to write down what they say over the next year.

Lovick will help co-ordinate the research, which will involve Dene language experts, research and recording assistants, as well as participating families.

At one point, Canada was home to more than 70 distinct First Nations languages. Recent figures suggest about a dozen have disappeared altogether and the others – with few exceptions – are extremely endangered.

"By our being there and fostering this interest in children learning the language, we're hoping that maybe this will remind people how important it is to speak Dene to their kids so that they keep learning Dene," Lovick said. "In many other places it's too late."

One aim of the research is to identify ways to teach First Nations languages more effectively to adults.

"We know how hard they are to learn as adults," Jung said. "So everybody is actually really excited to see finally how children do it because we just don't know how to do it easily."

One idea – currently being challenged – is that children's brains have a "hard-wired" grammar module called Universal Grammar from which all human languages can be derived.

Another idea is that learning a language relies on general cognitive mechanisms.

Much of the initial research on Inuktitut and East Cree is already underway or been done.

The other languages in the study are Turkish, Japanese, Russian, Sesotho, which is spoken in southern Africa, Yucatec Maya in Mexico, Chintang in Nepal, and Indonesian.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cp24.com/news/three-indigenous-languages-still-spoken-in-canada-included-in-major-study-1.2323310>

## ReMatriate wants to take back 'visual identity' of First Nations

**Traditions belong to families, clans and people who fought to preserve them: ReMatriate member**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 12, 2015 2:52 PM CT Last Updated: Apr 12, 2015 2:56 PM CT



Claire Anderson, right, spoke with CBC host Leonard Linklater about the ReMatriate collective made up of indigenous women from across the country. (CBC)

A Yukon woman is part of a national group fighting back against the misappropriation of indigenous images and labels in pop culture.

Claire Anderson, a lawyer in Whitehorse, is a member of ReMatriate, a collective of women from different First Nations across the country using photography and social media to take back control of their “visual identity.”

The tipping point came when a Canadian designer [announced its new fashion line called D-Squaw](#), which its website stated was inspired by “Canadian Indian tribes.”

That provoked a group of women to start talking about how they could create awareness around use of the word “squaw,” said Kelly Edzerza-Bapty, a member of the collective who lives in Vancouver.

“[Squaw] is such a derogatory term to refer to young indigenous women,” said Edzerza-Bapty.

She said ReMatriate was formed to start discussing “how can we start to take that image and turn it into a positive message in which we can show what indigenous women represent.”



The ReMatriate collective is using social media and photography so First Nations can ‘be the ones that control the lens through which we are viewed.’ (ReMatriate)

Edzerza-Bapty said the collective is made up of a diverse group of female fashion designers, singers, models, architects, artists and advocates.

“ReMatriate” refers to the group’s desire to take back their female identity and role in society. They plan to do this by sharing the images and stories of First Nations women through social media ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)) and eventually, photography exhibitions.

Many Western indigenous cultures were based around a matriarch system, the female role in the community, Edzerza-Bapty explained.

## **Traditions, culture, not part of public domain**

Anderson said she thinks people forget how recently some First Nations cultural practices – like potlatches – were “outlawed.”

People take it for granted that First Nations’ traditions belong to the public domain, she added, but “it really doesn’t. They belong to families, they belong to clans, they belong to the people that fought to preserve it.”

Anderson said the collective is hoping indigenous women of all ages approach them with their stories, photos and ideas.

ReMatriate wants First Nations to lead the discussion about “who we are as a people and how we’re represented,” said Anderson.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/rematriate-wants-to-take-back-visual-identity-of-first-nations-1.3029833>



# Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty

## Island's native leaders commit to tackling homelessness off-reserve

[Sarah Petrescu](#) / Times Colonist  
April 16, 2015 06:01 AM



Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi is a First Nations educator, consultant and former chief contracted by the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness to find culturally appropriate solutions to aboriginal homelessness. Photograph By Submitted

First Nations and Métis leaders from across the Island joined the city's homeless and advocates in an emotional ceremony at the Esquimalt Big House Wednesday, where they committed to solving urban aboriginal homelessness.

"We are here to lift you up and show you that we care," said Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi, a First Nations educator, consultant and former chief contracted by the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness to find culturally appropriate solutions to aboriginal homelessness.

More than a dozen chiefs and aboriginal leaders signed a drum to launch the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness. The new coalition is funded by the GVCEH and will eventually operate independently.

According to the GVCEH, about 30 per cent of the city's homeless identify as aboriginal. Yet aboriginal people represent only three to five per cent of the population.

Executive director Andrew Wynn-Williams said the coalition has struggled to engage with aboriginal homeless people.

“We need to identify cultural solutions, but also to build trust and ask what those solutions should be,” Williams said. Aboriginal street liaison Bernice Kamano and Hunt-Jinnouchi met with homeless people over community meals and meetings to hear their stories.

“I heard over and over again from people who are homeless that it was not necessarily the food and housing they needed most,” Hunt-Jinnouchi said. “There was a deep spiritual desire for cultural connections. ... It goes to the essence of who we are as indigenous people. To feel rooted, you have to have a sense of your community and history.”

She said feedback from leaders in First Nations communities was that “quite often, it’s not a matter of not caring but rather so much going on on reserves already.”

All recognized the importance of helping homeless community members off-reserve.

“The recurring theme was that this is so needed, that even though we’re not there and active, we know our people are hurting and need help,” Hunt-Jinnouchi said.

James Wilson, chairman of the Kwakiutl District Council, which represents 15 Kwakwaka’wakw bands on the Island, said he was surprised at how many of his people were in Victoria and homeless. He hopes the new coalition will bring more awareness to his nation and others. “We need to learn how we can work together. ... I’m hoping we are going to have reports of innovative ideas on how to tackle these issues. Communication is the first step.”

For one Victoria homeless couple, having leaders from their Island nations commit to help is as meaningful as finding solutions.

“It means a lot to us for them to come,” said Marlene Williams. Originally from the Huu-ay-aht First Nation near Bamfield, she has lived on and off in Victoria.

For the past eight months, Williams, 40, and her partner Eric Amos, 36, have started each day not knowing where they will sleep that night — a friend’s couch, a shelter or a bed at the sobering centre if they’re lucky, she said. “We put our stuff in a locker. It’s long walking days with sore feet at the end,” said Williams. They both battle alcoholism and said the challenges of being homeless are especially hard for aboriginal people.

“From my band, I’ve felt dismissed because of the alcoholism and because I’m not on reserve,” Williams said.

They described being torn between two worlds and cultures, and how that alienation is compounded by racism from passersby and landlords.

“I see how people look at us and I want to say, ‘I’m not a stupid drunken native. I went to college just like you,’ ” she said.

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/island-s-native-leaders-commit-to-tackling-homelessness-off-reserve-1.1825185#sthash.TP3fPM9U.dpuf>

## Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

### Job-hunters learning to make successful jump from First Nation to city

**Carry the Kettle Nakota Nation members enrolled in new program for young adults**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 09, 2015 6:00 PM CT Last Updated: Apr 09, 2015 6:02 PM CT



Tony O'Watch, 23, of Carry the Kettle Nakota Nation, says the MORE program is helping him make a successful transition from the reserve to the city. (Nichole Huck/CBC)

Moving from the reserve to the big city for a job can always be hard, but for First Nations youth, the change can be especially challenging.

For some, finding a good place to live and getting hooked up with school or a job can seem like overwhelming tasks.

Now, Carry the Kettle Nakota Nation is partnering with the Regina Work Preparation Centre and the North Central Family Association to help.

### Program for young adults aged 18-24

They've developed an eight-week program called MORE — Moving On to Regina for Employment — which helps young adults with job and life skills.

It deals with self-esteem, time management, culture shock, sense of self and dealing with racism.



Nettie Pelletier (right) is one of the organizers of the MORE program which helps transition young people from life on reserve to life in Regina. (Nichole Huck/CBC)

There are also some of the nuts and bolts of job-hunting, including career planning, employability skills, resume preparation, cover letter writing and interview skills.

Nettie Pelletier, one of the organizers of MORE, says there's a need for a program to help young people make the transition from life on reserve to life in Regina.

"Some people have come in from reserve without support and have failed drastically," she said.

## **Career as underwater welder one young man's dream**

Among those enrolled is Tony O'Watch, 23, who had tried leaving his reserve before to go out and find work but always ended up back home.

He realized he needed to finish his education before he could realize his dreams, which include becoming an underwater welder.



Cheyenne Williams and Trey Littlelent feel they're better equipped to handle the move to the city after taking part in the program. (Nichole Huck/CBC)

Now he's enrolled in MORE and believes he's getting what he needs to make the transition.

"The most helpful [part] is dealing with racism and stuff," he said. "We don't really deal with that on the reserve much. Sometimes you got to educate the person on your culture and stuff, you know?"

## **Help offered for finding basic services**

The program also helps people find basic services like housing and child care, something of use to Cheyenne Williams and her partner Trey Littleton, who have two children under the age of three.

They had lived in the city before with Williams' aunt but were forced to move back to Carry the Kettle because of financial problems.

"Keeping up with bills and such was too much," Littleton said.

The couple feels they will be better equipped to move to the city this time.

"The first time we moved here it took us some time to find jobs. We didn't know how to do a resume," she said. "This time we have someone helping us find full-time employment."

## **Making it on their own**

Williams said she and Littleton are excited to be able to live on their own and take care of their young family by themselves.

Meanwhile, interest has been expressed to expand the MORE program to other First Nations.

*You can hear more about this program and meet other people working to make north central Regina a better place to live, work and raise a family this morning on the Morning Edition. Join the show live at the Albert Scott community centre or on the radio from 6 a.m. until 8:30 a.m. Friday morning.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/job-hunters-learning-to-make-successful-jump-from-first-nation-to-city-1.3026839>

## **Aboriginal work stats stagnant: Economist**

## Province 'winning some battles,' but issue 'not improving'

By Jason Warick, The StarPhoenix April 13, 2015



File photo: Sheldon Wuttunee, Wednesday, March 25, 2015 at TCU Place during an aboriginal job forum.

Saskatchewan is winning a few battles but is losing the war against First Nations joblessness, says a University of Saskatchewan economist.

The consequences of continued failure will cost the province's economy billions every year, said U of S professor Eric Howe.

"This is something that we cannot afford to lose - at least not those of us who intend for Saskatchewan to be our home," Howe said.

According to figures released last week, Saskatchewan's unemployment rate dropped to 4.4 per cent in March, by far the lowest in Canada. However, the numbers for First Nations and Metis people, after years of gradual improvement, have stagnated in recent years.

Metis unemployment levels hover in the 10 per cent range in Saskatchewan, with First Nations even higher at roughly 15 per cent. More than 18,000 First Nations adults in the province remain on welfare, the same level as five years ago.

"Overall, the situation is not improving," Howe said.

The provincial government committed to an aboriginal education employment strategy in 2011. According to its website, the government "recognizes that the education and employment outcomes of First Nations and Metis peoples must improve so that we all share in Saskatchewan's growth and prosperity."

Howe said there is interesting work being done on some fronts. First Nations such as the Whitecap Dakota Nation and Lac la Ronge Indian Band have created hundreds of jobs in recent years. The Mistawasis First Nation and others are employing a team approach to education and career counselling.

A massive database linking First Nations workers and contractors with educational institutions, government programs and large companies was launched last month. Advocates such as Saskatchewan

First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence CEO Sheldon Wuttunee say it will make all sides "more accountable."

Howe said these efforts are all laudable and promising, but much more is needed.

He said governments need to ask themselves whether there are other policies in other departments that are erecting barriers on this front. The temporary foreign worker program's launch and expansion coincided with the plateauing of aboriginal employment progress, he said.

The recent changes to the program may have a positive impact, but it's too early to tell, he added.

In 2013, Howe authored a study that stated Saskatchewan stood to lose \$6.7 billion in gross domestic product if First Nations education and employment rates continued to stagnate.

He said he sees little reason to think anything's changed since the release of his study, *Employment of First Nations People: Saskatchewan Lags Behind*.

Howe said the proportion of First Nations and Metis people in Saskatchewan will increase dramatically in the coming decades, so the situation will become more urgent.

"We have a choice to make here," he said.

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**Direct Link:**

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/business/Aboriginal+work+stats+stagnant+Economist/10967149/story.html>

## Aboriginal Politics



# On one First Nations reserve, signs that Alberta PCs have meandered for too long

JEFF LEWIS

SIKSIKA FIRST NATION, ALTA. — The Globe and Mail

Published Friday, Apr. 10 2015, 9:03 PM EDT

Last updated Friday, Apr. 10 2015, 9:03 PM EDT

Ferris Smith still gets nervous every June. In 2013, the Bow River ripped a swath of destruction through southern Alberta. His ranch here on the water's edge was inundated. His basement was water-logged. Pasture turned sodden. A tractor was swallowed by mud.

"It came so quick," the 76-year-old recalled on a recent morning. There was no time to react. "Just trying to get the hell out of here is what I was trying to do."



Ferris Smith walks through on his once-flooded ranch at the Siksika reserve. (Photos by Todd Korol for The Globe and Mail)

When the water finally ebbed, Mr. Smith set about cleaning up. He is still at it. "It's a hell of a mess," he said, surveying a tangle of bone-dry tree branches strewn about his yard. He credits the Alberta government for providing assistance and helping him get back on his feet.

But that is where the kind words for the long-ruling Progressive Conservative Party end. After 44 years in power, he says, the Tory crew has grown fat with entitlements and they take voters for granted: “It’s grilled into their minds that they’ll never lose, and that bothers me.”

It is a rare flash of partisanship on the Siksika reserve, which sits about 100 kilometres east of downtown Calgary. The reserve is under federal jurisdiction, so provincial contests tend to drum up little interest. Election signs here are as scarce as jobs and adequate housing – perennial concerns locals say have grown more acute since the flood forced hundreds from their homes into temporary accommodation.



(Ottawa does not collect employment data on reserves, citing high costs and the difficulty of conducting surveys in remote locations. But a recent Statistics Canada pilot study pegged the jobless rate in Siksika at 26.6 per cent, versus 5.3 per cent for the non-aboriginal population of Alberta.)

Voter turnout in 2012, when Alison Redford took the helm of the Tory dynasty, was about 18 per cent on the reserve, which includes four electoral districts. That compares with 53 per cent in the surrounding riding of Little Bow. The riding has sent a Conservative to the legislature in three of the past four elections.

This year’s contest comes after a clutch of Wildrose party members crossed the floor to join Jim Prentice and the Tories late last year. Among the first to jump ship was Little Bow MLA Ian Donovan, who left Wildrose in November and is running as a PC.

His departure was followed by a mass defection led by former Wildrose leader Danielle Smith, who last month lost her nomination for the riding of Highwood to former Okotoks councillor Carrie Fischer.

Mr. Donovan did not respond to a request for comment. His cross-over does not sit well with staunch supporters of the opposition party here. But others on the reserve say they will cast their lot with Mr. Prentice's PCs anyway.

They point to his work as a land-claims negotiator for the Alberta government before he became a federal minister, and his role as co-chairman of the federal Indian Claims Commission, as reasons for optimism.

As Premier, Mr. Prentice appointed himself minister of aboriginal affairs, and has pledged to smooth relations with northern bands on issues ranging from health care to land use. "He'll help us," said an 80-year-old woman who declined to give her name.

Flood assistance has generated some goodwill. The Tories pledged \$83-million to rebuild homes and infrastructure on the reserve. Another \$10-million was set aside for skills training.

However, some damaged homes have yet to be torn down more than two years after the disaster. And residents say temporary accommodation – phalanxes of drab, grey trailers – is likely to become permanent to cope with an acute shortage of housing.

Meanwhile, widespread apathy threatens to keep many from the polls. Many doubt the province can help alleviate youth unemployment (the reserve's median age is 24.7, versus 36.5 provincially). "They've got no jobs, no place to go," said Ed Calfrope, a retired rancher.



Ferris Smith (L) and his son Tony feed their cattle on his ranch.

Voters like Mr. Smith are fed up. He plans to vote Wildrose, he said during a short break from feeding cattle a breakfast of hay.

He does not think the party will capture many seats, but he thinks a resurgent New Democratic Party under leader Rachel Notley could tilt the balance of power.

“If we ended up with a minority government, I wouldn’t cry,” he said. “If it’ll take a few seats away from the PCs, I’m all for it.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/alberta/alberta-election-siksika-first-nations-reserve/article23887118/>

## **First Nations leaders hail longer terms, other voting changes**

FRANCIS CAMPBELL TRURO BUREAU

Published April 13, 2015 - 9:23pm



Andrea Paul, chief of the Pictou Landing First Nation

The 13 First Nations bands in Nova Scotia are being asked to make some serious decisions before they cast ballots in a next election.

The First Nations Elections Act and the First Nations Elections Act regulations came into force across the country April 2.

Designed to support stronger, more stable and effective First Nations governments, the legislation promotes four-year terms for elected councils, a more rigorous nomination process and common election days.

“It’s another option as far as trying to change the Indian Act in regards to how elections are conducted in First Nations across the country,” said Millbrook Chief Robert Gloade, who hosted federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt on Friday to talk about the changes.

“The focus was to try to give bands the option to deviate away from the current election regime under the Indian Act by way of a simpler process through legislation.”

Gloade said the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs and other groups have been working on the legislation since 2008 as a way of revising the Indian Act regulations that now steer elections policy, procedure and guidelines.

But each band has to opt into the new legislation after community consultation.

“If they opt in, they are no longer under the Indian Act legislation and they can never revert back to it,” Gloade said. “But they can always move forward to the new legislation, to a custom election. In order to opt in, they have to have community consultation with community members, both on- and off-reserve, and give the minister written notice.”

Andrea Paul, serving a second term as chief of the Pictou Landing First Nation, said her council will be taking the legislation and regulations to the community Tuesday.

“I don’t know when the actual decisions will be made to move forward with the next steps. The community will have to ratify it.”

Paul thinks the legislation’s four-year council terms make more sense than the two-year terms in place now.

“Two years is such a short time frame to try to get the big work done and the big projects moving.”

Bands are free to choose to continue running elections under the old Indian Act regime, Gloade said, but he, too, likes a lot of what is contained in the new act.

“Once nominated, their names were automatically on the ballot,” he said of the existing system. “They had a small window of opportunity to remove themselves off that ballot. Now, if they are nominated, it’s changed to that they have a small window of opportunity to accept the nomination. If they seriously want to run, they have to fill out a form and go through that process.”

Gloade said bands can also levy a fee for prospective councillors in an effort to “deter individuals who just want to run for the sake of running.”

In the Sipekne’katik Band election in November, 60 people ran for 12 council seats. Under the new legislation, bands can decide to set or waive the candidate fees.

“It can vary. It depends on what the community decides to do. It will be set to a maximum of \$250 per candidate that can then either be donated or used to cover the cost of the election.”

The fee would be refunded if the candidate received at least five per cent of the total votes cast.



Similar to other election laws, penalties would be imposed for offences such as obstructing the electoral process and engaging in corrupt or fraudulent activities in relation to an election.

Gloade said if there are more than six bands in a province or a territory that want to go to a common election date, they can pick a common date and put it into force. The bands that don't want a common date could choose their own election dates, as they do now.

**Direct Link:** <http://thechronicleherald.ca/novascotia/1280373-first-nations-leaders-hail-longer-terms-other-voting-changes>

## First Nations need real reform

By [Lorne Gunter](#), QMI Agency

First posted: Tuesday, April 14, 2015 07:51 PM EDT | Updated: Tuesday, April 14, 2015 08:02 PM EDT



Ottawa has attempted on more than one occasion to break the cycle of bad governance in Canada's First Nations, but have been met with resistance from a majority of chiefs. (ANDRE FORGET/POSTMEDIA NETWORK FILES)

We are killing our First Nations with kindness – and political correctness.

What most First Nations need is fewer tax dollars, better educational options for their young people and more individual liberty. Instead, Canada's courts and politicians think more collectivism and more cash are the solutions to Third World conditions on many reserves.

Both the Chretien and Harper governments have attempted to break the cycle of bad governance that is behind much of the dysfunction on half or more of Canada's just over 630 reserves.

The Liberals attempted to pass a First Nations Governance Act (FNGA) in 2002. It was an effort to make band councils more democratic and more accountable to their members and to Ottawa.



Chretien's FNGA would have replaced the race-based Indian Act and introduced new rules to ensure free and fair elections on reserves, applied financial management standards comparable to those used by municipal and provincial governments, and sought to make on-reserve administration more professional.

The Liberal law would also have brought bands under the Canadian Human Rights Act, which would have meant members (particularly aboriginal women) could have filed complaints against their reserve councils for unequal treatment and clannish favouritism.

However, like new education reforms introduced by the Harper government more than two years ago, the Liberals' FNGA was opposed by about two-thirds of the country's chiefs. And given that chiefs hold great influence – greater influence than non-aboriginal politicians – both the Liberals' and the Tories' reforms were stymied.

Nearly everything on-reserve goes through the chiefs and councils – money for housing, job creation, health and education. And at the end of the day, there is only as much accountability as on-reserve leaders want to accept.

Imagine if your town's or city's mayor and council were given by Ottawa all the money for everything that goes on in your municipality – all the money for your personal salary and the salaries of everyone else in town, for your personal housing and for your personal treatment at the local hospital.

What if your mayor and councillors had control over all the money for post-secondary education and could decide which students got free college tuition and which did not. Do you really think, as a parent, you'd stand up to them publicly when you opposed their decisions on other matters?

You couldn't even own your own home. You live in it and get repairs at the pleasure of local politicians.

And if your town council could set its own salaries and approve its own expense accounts, and didn't have to be accountable to taxpayers or voters or a higher order of government, it wouldn't take long before lots of non-aboriginal governments were just as messed up.

The wonder is not how half to two-thirds of reserve governments have become messes of mismanagement and, in some cases, corruption. The wonder is that one-third of them are well managed and prosperous despite the temptation to be otherwise.

So, of course, despite their claims to hate the Indian Act, a majority of chiefs resist every attempt at reform that would break their stranglehold on power inherent in that act.

Holding this flawed model in place are non-aboriginal lefties in the media, politics and academia who shout "racist!" at every reform proposal. They and the chiefs believe none of First Nations' problems are of their own making (nor the fault of the funding system).

Everything can be claimed on bigotry by non-aboriginals – and, of course, on too little public funding.

Ottawa already spends nearly three times per capita on First Nations what it spends on non-aboriginal Canadians. If money were the solution, the problems would have disappeared by now.

It's not lack of money. Rather, the problem is that too little of the money gets to where it is needed.

Now a new Fraser Institute report has identified another source of aboriginal problems – court decisions that give First Nations control over their ancestral lands (self-government), but only if all lands are owned and administered collectively through the chiefs and band councils.

Forty years of decisions such as Delgamuukw, Tsilhqot'in and Mikisew have recognized aboriginal land claims, but have also perpetuated the same governance model as the Indian Act.

Aboriginal land cannot be subdivided and owned individually. In other words, there are no property rights except the bands'. That makes economic development, construction and resource projects much harder to put together, which in turn reduces investment, retards development and perpetuates the cycle of poverty and despair.

Such politically correct thinking from the bench is only making matters worse.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ottawasun.com/2015/04/14/first-nations-need-real-reform>

## **Bill C-51: First Nation chief warns labour activists about jail time**

**RCMP spied on Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Chief Donny Morris during 2008 mining dispute**

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 16, 2015 2:20 PM ET Last Updated: Apr 16, 2015 5:20 PM ET



Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Chief Donny Morris in front of the Ontario Court of Appeal on Thursday, expressing his concerns about Bill C-51. (Alvin Fiddler/Twitter)

A First Nation leader, who went to jail defending his community's traditional territory in northern Ontario, is warning other activists about the risks of government spying posed by Bill C-51.

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Chief Donny Morris already has the documents to show that the RCMP and government officials were spying on his community during a mining dispute in 2008.

He filed an access to information request on Thursday to discover the extent of the surveillance and called on other First Nations to do the same.

"Eventually if you're categorized as a terrorist, you're going to be spending the rest of your life in prison and for myself, spending time in jail for our action, I didn't really appreciate that," Morris told CBC News. "It was humiliating."

Morris and five other leaders of Kitchenuymaykoosib Inninuwug were jailed for more than two months for protesting against a mining company operating on the community's traditional lands. The Court of Appeal eventually ordered their release and Ontario bought out the company's claims in the area.

## **'Am I going to be allowed to travel?'**

The experience has left Morris wary of government powers and worried about travelling outside his remote community, 600 kilometres north of Thunder Bay.

"I always am afraid that my phone is tapped," he said. "At times I feel for my safety. Going through airports, if I have to go through security, am I going to be allowed to travel? I feel threatened too."

Despite his fears, Morris decided to accept an invitation to speak about his experience and his concerns in Toronto on Thursday, during a forum on Bill C-51. People need to know that just because their actions are peaceful, they are not immune to government spying, he said.

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On 2008-03-29, 120 people demonstrated in support of incarcerated Head councillor Cecilia Begg. The group marched down the sidewalk on the East Highway to the point where Begg could see them waving and cheering from her cell window. The demonstration was peaceful. Aboriginal Affairs Minister Michael Bryant has stated that, since the Crown has not recommended incarceration, the provincial government is supporting an overturn of the decision and that Chief Morris and council should be freed. (U) (Miner and News, 2008-03-31).

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An excerpt of an RCMP document obtained through access to information requests shows the police were keeping tabs on Kitchenuhmaykoosib, and that they were aware of the peaceful nature of the protest. (CBC)

"To co-exist in peaceful harmony as our elders taught us, that's the thing that leads us most," Morris said. "We don't go out blocking roads or burning things up. We are peaceful."

Last month Morris wrote a letter to his MP, Natural Resources Minister Greg Rickford, asking him to withdraw his support for Bill C-51.

"The legislation is clear: our security agencies can only target those who pose a risk to Canada, and not those engaged in legitimate dissent," a spokesperson for Rickford told CBC News in an email at the time.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/bill-c-51-first-nation-chief-warns-labour-activists-about-jail-time-1.3035878>

## **Tsawwassen First Nation's new legislative seat eyed by elders**

**Elders call for new seat in Tsawwassen First Nation legislature to be reserved for elder**

By Ryan Erwin and Paolo Pietropaolo, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 16, 2015 5:00 AM PT  
Last Updated: Apr 16, 2015 8:19 AM PT



Ruth Adams, an elder from the Tsawwassen First Nation (TFN), sits on the Advisory Council for the TFN government and is very active within the community. (Paolo Pietropaolo)

Elders are hoping to have a stronger voice in the governance of the Tsawwassen First Nation in B.C.

The Tsawwassen First Nation (TFN) has been governed by a 13-member legislature since its historic 2009 treaty. Next year, a new seat will be added to the Tsawwassen legislature due to a rapidly growing population.

Elder Ruth Adams hopes the government will consider reserving that position for an elder.

"We've got enough young ones in that legislature so I think we need an old person in there," said Adams.

"Somebody who has the history."

Adams is an energetic septuagenarian with piercing dark eyes that have watched her community live through hard times and the triumph of the treaty. Just by virtue of her age, she is a rarity on the Tsawwassen First Nation.

Adams says the Tsawwassen First Nation has only about 15 elders.

## **A youthful nation**

The 472-member Tsawwassen First Nation is getting progressively younger, reflecting a trend seen across Canada among First Nations populations.

The TFN government says the growth of its young population base is the principal reason the population has increased by more than 100 since the 2009 treaty.

As of April 2015, 52 per cent of the population of Tsawwassen First Nation is under 25 — almost twice the national rate.

The TFN constitution calls for the legislature to be expanded by one seat whenever the population increases by 100.

So far, the government hasn't considered reserving the new seat for any particular demographic group, said TFN's 25-year-old chief, Bryce Williams.



In 1958, the original Tsawwassen longhouse was bulldozed by the B.C. government, without consultation, in order to make way for a road to the B.C. Ferries Terminal. The new longhouse, completed in 1997, is part of TFN's quest to reclaim its language and culture. (Paolo Pietropaolo)

"No matter what, it's going to be a different voice, whether it's an elder or another community member. We're all happy to have another voice to speak for the community and for the people."

But Tsawwassen elder Shirley Larden says the problem is that elders don't have enough of a voice in the community.

Larden thinks a dedicated elders' position in the TFN legislature would be a good idea "if [the elders'] decisions were respected," she said.

"We've had a series of young chiefs. If there's a movement by young people, it usually ends up going ahead."

## **Loss of language and culture**

Adams and Larden often participate in TFN's bi-weekly elders' luncheon.

Every Tuesday and Thursday, elders gather for a hot lunch at the Elders' Centre. They sit together around a large table, eating salmon, telling stories and sharing the latest gossip.



The centre also hosts language lessons on Wednesday evenings. The Tsawwassen formerly spoke Hun'qumi'num, a Coast Salish dialect, but there are no fluent speakers left.



Every Tuesday and Thursday, Tsawwassen elders and others gather for the elders' luncheon, a key part of the community's social calendar. The elders' luncheon is one of many ways in which the TFN government supports Tsawwassen elders. (Paolo Pietropaolo)

The loss of language and culture is a legacy of the residential school system and other events that occurred in the 20th century. The Tsawwassen longhouse was demolished by the B.C. government in 1958 to make way for the nearby B.C. Ferries Terminal.

"The longhouse was taken away, the church was taken away — so Tsawwassen First Nation had no beliefs for a long time," said Adams.

"And all of the elders died. [The TFN government] didn't know any better that they needed an elder in there. They didn't go against it. They just didn't know that they needed one."

Adams says the remaining elders represent a critical link to Tsawwassen's history and culture.

## **The role of the elder**

"There needs to be some sort of institutional intervention [in Tsawwassen] to ensure that elders' perspective is included in decision-making," said former Tsawwassen chief Kim Baird.

Elders have long held a mentorship role in many First Nations communities, passing down history and culture to future generations and providing guidance to community leaders.

'Whenever an elder speaks up, you listen.'- *Elder Ruth Adams*

"I don't know if that's expressed properly anywhere, that special stewardship role of wisdom and knowledge," said Baird.

She said TFN could give elders a greater voice through direct consultation or through the formation of an advisory body.

Another self-governing First Nation in B.C., the Nisga'a Nation, does include elders in its governance structure. A four-member Council of Elders is appointed by the Nisga'a government.

The council is led by a chairperson — an elder elected by all Nisga'a citizens.

The council's mandate is to provide guidance and interpretation of Nisga'a traditional laws and practices.

Chief Williams said he's interested in researching the Nisga'a model and learning about how the council's interactions and decisions affect Nisga'a governance. He concedes involving the elders on some level in Tsawwassen could be beneficial.

"I think it would be valuable ... I'm open to different ideas that might be brought to the table in terms of involvement of elders in the governance structure."

## **Engaging other elders**

"The one thing I've learned is in our tradition you don't force things," said Adams.

Although Adams would like the new seat on the TFN legislature to be reserved for an elder, she thinks it needs to happen organically.

She plans to talk about the issue at the elders' luncheon so the other elders can weigh in. Adams says the luncheon is where other elders feel most comfortable giving voice to their opinions.

"That's when they speak up and I'm happy for that," she said.

Even if TFN decides to create a dedicated elders' position in the legislature, the challenge may be in persuading other elders to run for the position.

"They are not very public and they don't seem too likely to be involved in [government]," says Adams. "But that makes it more important for me to keep going."

Williams plans to reflect on the matter and discuss it with his colleagues in the legislature.

"Of course, elders have a lot of valuable information and ideas," he said.

"Whenever an elder speaks up, you listen."

*The series "siyólexwe: Stories of Elders and Seniors" is produced in partnership with the Reporting in Indigenous Community course at UBC's Graduate School of Journalism.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/tsawwassen-first-nation-s-new-legislative-seat-eyed-by-elders-1.3022421>

## Aboriginal Sports

### 3 Native NHLers Vying for Stanley Cup Glory

[Sam Laskaris](#)

4/15/15

Carey Price already has a lengthy list of accomplishments.

And now the 27-year-old, a member of British Columbia's Ulkatcho First Nation, is hoping to lead the Montreal Canadiens to glory in the National Hockey League playoffs, which begin today.

Price and his teammates will face off against the Ottawa Senators, in an opening best-of-seven Eastern Conference series. The first two matches are scheduled for tonight and Friday in Montreal.

Many hockey experts believe Price, arguably the top goaltender in the world right now, will backstop the Canadiens to a rather lengthy post-season. A club needs to win four playoff rounds to capture the Stanley Cup, annually awarded to the NHL's playoff champions.

Price, who also led Canada to the gold medal in the men's hockey tournament at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, appears primed for a successful post-season. The eight-year pro shone during the 2014-15 regular season.



Carey Price (Associated Press)

Price registered career highs this season for wins (44) and shutouts (nine) and for the first time in his pro career also had a goals-against average below 2.00 (1.96).

Based on his regular season performances there's a chance Price might not only be selected as the league's top goalie but as the NHL's most valuable player as well.

Price, however, is not the only Native who will be involved in the NHL playoffs.

T.J. Oshie, an Ojibwe forward, is a member of the St. Louis Blues. The Blues will battle the Minnesota Wild in their opening best-of-seven Western Conference series, set to begin Thursday night in St. Louis.

Oshie, who is in his seventh NHL campaign, is an integral part of the Blues' offense. He had 55 points (19 goals, 36 assists) in 72 regular season contests.

Also, Michael Ferland, a 22-year-old Cree who is a rookie forward with the Calgary Flames, will get his first taste of NHL playoff action.

Calgary will square off against the Vancouver Canucks in their best-of-seven Western Conference series. Game 1 is tonight in Vancouver. Ferland split the season between the Flames and their American Hockey League affiliate Adirondack Flames. He appeared in 26 games with Calgary and contributed five points, including two goals.

Meanwhile, several other Native players and coaches did not have their teams qualify for the NHL playoffs this season.

The Los Angeles Kings, whose roster included Native forwards Dwight King and Jordan Nolan, just missed out on a post-season berth, finishing ninth in the Western Conference standings. The top eight finishers in the league's two conferences advanced to the playoffs.

Both King (Metis) and Nolan (Ojibwe/Maliseet) experienced their share of success in recent years as the Kings who the Stanley Cup in 2012 and also last year.



Michael Ferland (Associated Press)

King ended up with 26 points in 81 games this season while Nolan had nine points in 60 games.

As for Nolan's father Ted, he had a less than memorable year as the head coach with the Buffalo Sabres. His club ended up dead last in the overall standings of the 30-team league.

The elder Nolan was fired on Sunday, the day after the NHL regular season concluded. It was also announced that Bryan Trottier (Metis), who was an assistant coach with the Sabres, would not have his contract renewed.

Buffalo's roster this season included Cody McCormick, a 31-year-old Chippewa forward. McCormick only appeared in 31 games this year. A blood clot discovered in his leg in January forced him to miss the remainder of the season.

Meanwhile, the two other Native coaches in the league did not have their teams qualify for the playoffs either. Craig Berube, who is Cree, served as the head coach of the Philadelphia Flyers. And Rocky Thompson, who is also Cree, was an assistant coach with the Edmonton Oilers.

Other Native players whose teams did not advance to the playoffs were Vern Fiddler, Kyle Chipchura, Rene Bourque and Jordin Tootoo.

Fiddler, a 34-year-old Metis forward, scored a career high 13 goals in 80 games with the Dallas Stars.

Chipchura, a 29-year-old Metis forward, had 14 points with the Arizona Coyotes.

As for Bourque, he bounced around this season, playing for three different clubs. He started the season with Montreal. He was then traded to the Anaheim Ducks before ending the year with the Columbus Blue Jackets.

Bourque, a 33-year-old Metis, had his season end in late March as he underwent back surgery. He appeared in a total of 51 games this year and earned 14 points.

Tootoo, a 32-year-old who is the first Inuk to play in the NHL, contributed 10 goals and five assists in 68 games for the New Jersey Devils.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/04/15/3-native-nhlers-tying-stanley-cup-glory-160023?nopaging=1>

## Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

### Fighting Climate Change Is Fighting for Human Rights

Posted: 04/10/2015 9:05 am EDT Updated: 4 hours ago



Inuit activist Sheila Watt-Cloutier remembers the day her neighbour didn't come home.

Simon Nattaq lives across the street from Watt-Cloutier in Iqaluit, Nunavut. He's a hunter with decades of experience and traditional knowledge handed down through generations. He knows the land -- when it's safe to go out on the ice. But in February 2001, an unexpected weak spot on a normally safe trail caught him by surprise and [his snowmobile plunged through the ice](#).

Nattaq clambered out of the water and survived until rescuers found him two days later. By then, frostbite had done its work. Both of Nattaq's legs had to be amputated.

For Watt-Cloutier -- a former politician and chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council -- the story illustrates how climate change attacks not just the environment, but the very foundations of Inuit knowledge, tradition and identity.

Last week, the world [observed Earth Hour](#). Across Canada people flipped off the lights in a symbolic gesture to support action against climate change. But some influential voices



like Watt-Cloutier and Mary Robinson -- former prime minister of Ireland and United Nations High Commissioner -- suggest we're looking at climate change the wrong way.

Climate change is not only an environmental issue, they say. It's also a human rights issue.

"Our right to educate, right to culture, right to health, our right to be Inuit as we know it, is at stake," argues Watt-Cloutier. Her [recently published memoir \*The Right To Be Cold\*](#) (Allen Lane Canada, 2015) touches extensively on the connection between climate change and the rights of Inuit people.

Watt-Cloutier views climate change as the second wave of an assault on Inuit identity. The first wave being residential schools.

It's not simply that warming waters and melting ice in the North make an unforgiving landscape more unpredictable and treacherous. They affect hunting, which impacts an [already difficult food security problem](#).

Watt-Cloutier adds the changing environment impedes the Inuit from teaching and passing on their culture and traditions to the next generation, because these elements of their identity are inexorably linked to the land. This loss of identity, in turn, fuels social problems like [terrifyingly high suicide rates](#).

"If we think we have problems now, we ain't seen nothing yet," Watt-Cloutier ominously predicts.

Mary Robinson has travelled extensively and seen the greatest atrocities facing our world. Robinson was U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights from 1997 to 2002, and is a member of The Elders -- a group of global leaders founded by Nelson Mandela to fight for peace and human rights. Of all she has witnessed, it's climate change that robs her of sleep.

"As many as 200-million people may be displaced by climate change by 2050. That keeps me awake and gets me going in the morning."

Robinson, who has her own foundation, [Climate Justice](#), tells us that throughout developing communities around the world she "kept on hearing the same refrain from people." As with the Inuit, age-old wisdom has been thrown out the window by climate change. Planting seasons, weather patterns, drought and rain cycles -- nothing is predictable anymore. People don't know when to plant or when to harvest.

Meanwhile, the U.N. has just released a report estimating that by 2030 -- just 15 years from now -- there will only be enough fresh water to meet [60 per cent of the world's need](#).

Robinson points out this impact on basic human rights -- the right to food and water -- has a cascade effect on other rights, [like gender equality](#). "Who is most affected among the poor? It is women. About 70 per cent of farmers in Africa are women. They have to put food on the table even if there is drought. They have to go further when water sources dry up."

With all the evidence, why has the world taken only the most tentative steps to address climate change?

Perhaps because we've always framed the question too narrowly. Save the planet. Save the polar bears. When really what we need to recognize is we're saving ourselves -- from hunger, from inequality, from losing a wealth of cultural traditions and knowledge.

Fighting climate change is fighting for human rights.

*Brothers Craig and Marc Kielburger founded a platform for social change that includes the international charity, Free The Children, the social enterprise, Me to We, and the youth empowerment movement, We Day.*

**Direct Link:** [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/craig-and-marc-kielburger/climate-change-human-rights\\_b\\_7033784.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/craig-and-marc-kielburger/climate-change-human-rights_b_7033784.html)

## **First Nations lead Quebec City march on climate action**

April 12, 2015 by [Tom Fennario](#)



***Tom Fennario***  
***APTN National News***

QUEBEC CITY—Standing at the head of the line, drum in hand, Melissa Mollen-Dupuis and several First Nation drummers took their first step forward. Behind them, an estimated 25,000 people followed.

“I say we need programs for people who are addicted to petrol and money,” said Mollen-Dupuis. “Just like we do for people who are addicted to alcohol and drugs.”

Mollen-Dupuis is a seasoned environmental activist.

The Innu from Mingan on Quebec’s North shore is a staple in environmental marches.

In today’s climate action march, she was walking for a new purpose.



Melissa Mollen-Dupuis marching in Quebec City Saturday

“I’m marching for twice as many reasons now,” said Mollen-Dupuis. “I have the pleasure of being pregnant now, and I have seven times the motivation for the next seven generations.”

Mollen-Dupuis was one of dozens of First Nation, Metis and Inuit people from across the country who led the march Saturday.

Organizer Christian Simard of Nature Quebec said they were chosen to lead for good reason.

“In the fight against the expansion of tar sands petroleum the First Nations played, and still play, a crucial role,” said Simard.

And now that Alberta tar sands bitumen may be coming east via the proposed [Energy East pipeline](#), organizers know that the fight might once again spill over onto First Nations land.

Grand Chief Serge Simon of Kanesatake Mohawk territory walked in the march to [raise awareness about the pipeline that if approved, will pass through Mohawk land.](#)

“The pipeline is passing under the Ottawa river, and if this thing ever bursts in the middle of winter, and you have four feet of ice like we did this year, how are they going to clean that mess up?” asked Simon. “It’s gonna come all the way down to the lake of two mountains in Kanesatake, where we still fish!”



The march snaked through a three-kilometre stretch of Quebec City, before stopping in front of Quebec’s National Assembly, home of the provincial government.

Toting red bristol boards, the crowd then organized themselves into a giant thermometer to symbolize the perilous rise in temperature that scientists say could lead to devastation if not stopped.

A Recent [United Nations environmental report \(UNER\) released last fall](#) states that in order to avoid rising temperatures, the Earth will need to be carbon neutral by 2070.

The report also outlines that in order to make this a reality, the switch over to renewable energy sources needs to begin now.

The march was planned ahead of Tuesday’s meeting between Canada’s premiers and Christiana Figures, the Executive Secretary of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change.



Christiana Figures

The meeting's purpose is to improve intergovernmental collaboration to combat climate change.

Mollen-Dupuis hopes the premiers will take heed of the message they are sending today.

"It's time to listen to the voice of the citizens who demand a lot more innovation on the part of thinking towards the future," said Mollen-Dupuis. "And not just in a four year (political) mandates, but projects for future generations."

The premiers have scheduled a news conference for Tuesday afternoon to announce the results of the meeting, and possibly climate change policies for the future.

Their declarations will be eagerly awaited for by Mollen-Dupuis, her unborn child, and 25,000 other marchers today.

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/04/12/first-nations-lead-quebec-city-march-climate-action/>

## **Fighting for the right to be cold**

Sheila Watt-Cloutier puts a warm, persistent face on the north's environmental crisis

by [Adria Vasil](#)

April 15, 2015 11:12 AM

It's just after 10 am one Monday at a bright, chatter-filled breakfast joint in east-end Toronto, and Sheila Watt-Cloutier is waiting on a small request: marmalade for her toast. So she asks the waitress - again - warmly.

The 2007 Nobel Peace Prize nominee, hailed as one of the world's most influential environmental and human rights advocates, is known for being persistent, particularly when it comes to the right to be cold.

In her newly released memoir, *The Right to Be Cold: One Woman's Story of Protecting Her Culture, the Arctic and The Whole Planet*, Watt-Cloutier takes us through the vibrant world she was born into near a former Hudson's Bay outpost and abandoned U.S. military base in Nunavik, northern Quebec.

With her white RCMP father absent from her life, Watt-Cloutier was raised by her single mother and grandmother in the rich traditional Inuit hunting culture of her ancestors, where "ice is life."

But in a single generation, she has witnessed massive societal shifts, most shocking of them the melting landscape. As the terrain the Inuit depended on for millennia vanishes, they've become the world's sentinels, the early warning signals of a planet losing its central AC - and moral compass. Watt-Cloutier asks, "If we cannot save the frozen Arctic, how can we save the rest of the world?"

For many of us snuggled up near Canada's southern border, climate change is still mostly an abstract idea dominated by distant images of melting glaciers and hungry polar bears.

But Watt-Cloutier gives the effects of global warming a beating human heart and face. Thawing permafrost and thinning ice have meant dangerously unpredictable conditions for an entire culture in northern Canada. Hunters must go further and further afield in search of dwindling food sources, and increasingly fall through ice that would once have been safe.

Watt-Cloutier has spent the last decade petitioning world leaders to help them recognize climate change not as a threat to the politics of "business as usual" but as a menace to humanity and "cultural survival."

The core of the problem, she says, putting down a forkful of her gluten-free eggs Benny, is our "othering" of each other. "There is nothing more destructive than seeing ourselves as different and separate from one another. This whole issue of climate change is very much about that."

It's why people who hop in an SUV in Toronto fail to connect it to that Inuit hunter falling through the ice. And it's why "nothing happens at climate negotiations," say Watt-Cloutier. "What do we care if the ice is melting? We're not eating seals. Let the Inuit adapt."

Alas, the Arctic isn't Vegas, and whatever happens there doesn't stay there. The effects are already fanning out across the globe. If we keep belching out climate-cooking emissions, she warns, people around the world, like the Inuit, will lose their ability to exercise their economic, social and cultural rights, too.

Thanks in large part to her work, which earned her the Nobel nomination, the UN Human Rights Council unanimously adopted a resolution in 2008 recognizing that "climate change... has implications for the full enjoyment of human rights."

Just don't call Watt-Cloutier an environmental activist.

"I'm born into a culture in which environment is all-encompassing. It's not just 'Let's save the trees,' or 'Let's save the seal.' Everything is interrelated. We are an extension of the land, we are the land, and the land is us. It's what we call 'sila,'" she continues, leaning in, "which is environment, but sila is also consciousness. Sila is wisdom."



Ultimately, she says, "it's the mother and grandmother in me" pushing her to show the world to see that erosion of the environment is related to the suicides, violence, self-destruction and addiction plaguing northern communities. "It's through that feeling of compassion for one another that the world can change. We can override this political machinery with that energy."

The key for Inuit survival now, she says, is to resist the pressures to open up the Arctic to drilling and focus on rooting their institutions in the culture of sustainability and resourcefulness that helped them survive and thrive for millennia.

"A carrot is being dangled to a people who are extremely vulnerable." There's a definite contradiction, she notes, in looking to fossil fuels beneath the ice to pull Arctic communities out of poverty, when high CO2 levels threaten the very survival of their culture.

"Why are we trusting these companies that have already created destructive paths and reputations around the world? Why would it be different for us in the Arctic?"

But there are signs of resistance, she says with a smile. Just last month, the mayor of Clyde River took seismic testing companies exploring for oil to court. "More of that has to happen."

As for the rest of Canada, "We have to continue to push very hard our own members of parliament to do the right thing before the next climate negotiations" in Paris in the fall.

Watt-Cloutier may no longer have official observer status at the UN since she stepped down as chair of the international arm of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, but she's planning to wrangle her way onto the podium at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris.

"If I'm going, it's to be given the floor for that high-moral-ground voice. We all need to be looking at ways we can address these issues that are not so bureaucratic and not so politically driven. Someone might say, 'You're dreaming in technicolor.' Well, let's do it. Let's dream in technicolor. Now's the time."

## **Sheila Watt-Cloutier: Making of a green hero**

- **Raised** traditionally in Nunavik, northern Quebec, until she was abruptly sent away to school in Nova Scotia and then Churchill Falls, Manitoba.
- **Studied** counselling, education and human development at McGill.
- **Started** as a hospital translator and education task force coordinator in Nunavik, lobbying to improve education and health care for her people.

- **Instrumental** in pushing for the 2001 global ban on persistent organic pollutants (think DDT and PCBs) as president of the Canadian arm of the Inuit Circumpolar Council.

- **Launched** the world's first international legal action on climate change in 2005, charging that U.S. greenhouse gas emissions were violating the Inuit's human rights. The legal petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights failed, but it laid the groundwork for the UN Human Rights Council's 2008 recognition of climate change's impact on human rights.

- **Nominated** for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 for making climate change a human rights issue. Al Gore won it that year.

**Direct Link:** <https://nowtoronto.com/news/earth-day-2015/if-we-cannot-save-the-frozen-arctic-how-can-we-save-the-re/>

## Land Claims & Treaty Rights

### Aboriginal Leader Says Consult or Risk Canada Resource Gains

by [Greg Quinn](#)  
10:01 PM MDT  
April 9, 2015



Assembly of First Nations leader Perry Bellegarde won the job in a December election following the surprise resignation of Shawn Atleo, whose support frayed as he sought cooperation on education funding with Harper. Photographer: Jeff McIntosh/The Canadian Press via AP Photo

Canada's top aboriginal leader warned that the country's push for resource projects will be bogged down in legal and political strife unless governments consult more on revenue sharing and environmental protection.

“People won’t invest in Canada if there is instability, if there is no partnership with indigenous peoples,” Perry Bellegarde, leader of the Assembly of First Nations, said Wednesday in an interview at Bloomberg’s Ottawa office. He said disputes over resource rights with aboriginals will affect most of the estimated C\$675 billion (\$536 billion) of projects over the next decade.

Aboriginal power is growing, as was shown in recent court [victories](#) involving land-claim issues and the Idle No More street protests that began about two years ago, said Bellegarde, who in December was elected to head the group [representing](#) about 900,000 people in 634 communities. Leaders of Canada’s First Nations will choose from a range of political and legal “alternatives” if the government continues to fail to “consult and accommodate” aboriginals, he said.

“So how do you stop that? Check your political strategy, check your legal strategy, and people will probably get on the land to protect the land,” he said. The pressure will also include more political lobbying in the run-up to the federal election expected in October, Bellegarde said.

## **‘People Get Frustrated’**

Bellegarde, 52, a Saskatchewan chief, won his AFN post following the surprise resignation of Shawn Atleo, whose support frayed as he sought cooperation on education funding with Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Some aboriginals want more resistance, including through street protests.

Harper’s focus on making Canada an energy superpower, and attempts to speed up project approvals, are leaving aboriginals behind, Bellegarde said. Projects -- such as Enbridge Inc.’s proposed Northern Gateway oil [pipeline](#) from Alberta’s oil sands to the Pacific coast -- run through land subject to agreements that have been disputed for centuries.

“These people are on unemployment and they are poor,” he said. “They watch all these trees being trucked out of their home territories and nothing coming back. People get frustrated seeing that every day, so people want to be involved.”

Recent court rulings have made clear that governments must make a genuine effort to “consult and accommodate” aboriginals where there is a credible land claim, said Karen Busby, a law professor at the University of Manitoba.

## **‘Serious Consideration’**

“We are going to start feeling the pain of the failure to do that in the next little while,” Busby said by telephone from Winnipeg. She also said the consultations are not “a veto” but “a serious consideration” for companies and governments.

Major resource projects have been built for most of Canada's history without substantial aboriginal input, as governments moved many families onto reservations and took a narrow interpretation of their land claims.

That has been changing in recent years, most notably with Enbridge's Northern Gateway project, which has been held up partly because of aboriginal opposition. A company official in September [conceded](#) that delays in gaining aboriginal support has meant plans to complete the project by 2018 were "quickly evaporating."

## National Summit

"There are some meaningful legal rights held by aboriginal communities, some of which are even more powerful in practical terms because of the potential to delay projects and tie them up in court challenges," Dwight Newman, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Rights in Constitutional and International Law at the University of Saskatchewan, said by e-mail. "Lots of companies prefer to negotiate to avoid the risks."

The expectation for rising investment in resource projects in the coming decade comes as a government-commissioned [report](#) last week said there has been "a conspicuous lack of urgency" in some treaty talks.

The AFN plans to host a summit on resource development next year that includes aboriginal, business and government leaders, Bellegarde said.

He declined to say if he supported Northern Gateway or TransCanada Corp.'s proposed Energy East [pipeline](#) from Alberta to New Brunswick, saying they are matters for local communities to decide. It's unclear what should happen if only a small minority of tribes along the path of a major project oppose it, he said.

## High Unemployment

Education remains a problem, with per-capita funding for aboriginals on reserves at C\$6,500 compared with C\$10,500 for Canadians in schools funded by provincial governments, Bellegarde said. That has contributed to unemployment rates that can reach as high as 70 percent on some reserves, he said. Canada's national rate was 6.8 percent in March.

"Things aren't alive and well in Canada when it comes to First Nations," he said. "People in the world need to know that and see that."

The pressure on government may increase this year as the AFN works on increasing voter turnout in 65 federal districts with a high ratio of aboriginals and persuading other Canadians of the need for change, Bellegarde said.

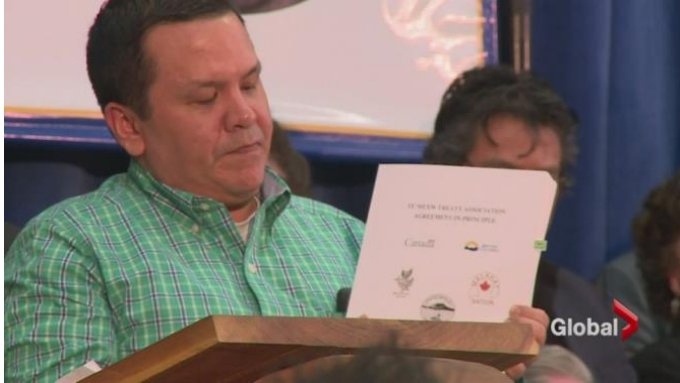
Such moves are less about challenging any political party than building on momentum from Idle No More protests, which showed that people are more willing to stand up to governments today, Bellegarde said.

“We have to harness that energy again, but to bring about constructive change in terms of policy and legislation,” he said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-04-10/help-aboriginals-or-risk-canada-resource-gains-new-leader-says>

## Five Vancouver Island First Nations reach lands and cash deal

By Staff The Canadian Press, April 9, 2015 7:13 pm



ESQUIMALT, B.C. – After two decades of negotiations, five Vancouver Island First Nations have signed an agreement-in-principle on a treaty that would include land and cash.

Hundreds of people gathered on the traditional lands of the Victoria-area Songhees First Nation to witness the signing ceremony on Thursday.

The Te'mexw (tah-muck) Treaty Association, representing the five southern Vancouver Island First Nations, reached the agreement that includes provisions to provide 1,565 hectares of Crown land and about \$142 million once a final agreement is reached. The sides have been negotiating for several years

The five groups represented are Victoria's Songhees First Nation, the Snaw-naw-as Nation north of Nanaimo, the Malahat Nation near Shawnigan Lake and the Sooke area First Nations, the Scia'new Nation (formerly Beecher Bay) and T'Sou-ke First Nation.

Such agreements set out the aims and goals of legally-binding final agreements.

The agreement-in-principle also covers issues of taxation, lands and sets out tools for governance.

Robert Phillips, of the First Nations Summit, says despite recent concerns around the treaty-making process, this agreement is a clear signal to all other First Nations sitting at the negotiating table that progress is possible.

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/1930709/five-vancouver-island-first-nations-reach-lands-and-cash-deal/>

## **On land title, which road will aboriginal groups take?**

Jeffrey Simpson, The Globe and Mail

Published Saturday, Apr. 11 2015, 3:00 AM EDT

Last updated Saturday, Apr. 11 2015, 3:00 AM EDT

It will take some time to measure the impact of the Supreme Court of Canada's judgment on aboriginal title, and the significant additional powers it gives aboriginal groups with that title.

The judgment, nine months ago, involved the Tsilhqot'in Nation, with about 3,000 people. They had been fighting commercial logging since 1983 in the territory they claimed as theirs.

Courtesy of the Supreme Court, their aboriginal title was affirmed, which meant in layman's language almost a de jure veto over anything done in that territory. The ruling was, of course, hailed by aboriginal leaders everywhere, but especially in British Columbia where there are few treaties.

Yes, the court said governments could assert some power to allow a development with a "compelling and substantial public purpose." But in the real world, as opposed to the one of legal reasoning, such a showdown between a government's "compelling and substantial public purpose" and an empowered aboriginal group would be messy at best and a stalemate at worst. A government would be very reluctant to put the amorphous "public interest" against a narrow but determined aboriginal one.

An optimist would say the court's ruling merely upped the requirements for any government or private interest wishing to do business on land claimed by aboriginals to take very seriously indeed their concerns.



Some business leaders in B.C. report that aboriginal leaders are anxious to cut deals because they understand the impoverishment of their peoples. Treaties and grand declarations and Supreme Court rulings are fine, but they are very far removed from indigenous people's more urgent requirements of employment, money and training.

So the Tsilhqot'in ruling, the optimists believe, will give aboriginal groups more confidence and non-aboriginal groups more certainty about how to enter into negotiations.

The optimists, however, will have trouble digesting the Affirmation of the Nemiah Declaration issued last month by the Tsilhqot'in Nation representing six communities. They were the victors before the Supreme Court, and the Nemiah Declaration indicates how they will use the ruling.

Forget any commercial activity in the Tsilhqot'in Nation territory. The declaration states there shall be no commercial logging, no "mining or mining explorations," "no commercial road building," "no dam construction." If any non-aboriginal wants to use the Nemiah Aboriginal Wilderness Preserve that the Tsilhqot'in just created, they can only do so with the Nation's permission through a system of permits that the Nation, and not the B.C. government, would issue.

The mining prohibition is especially interesting. Just before last year's Supreme Court ruling, the Tsilhqot'in National Government issued a draft mining policy that, among other objectives, aimed to "provide greater certainty for mining and mining exploration companies" and "ensure meaningful Tsilhqot'in participation in mining and exploration."

The Tsilhqot'in indicated that mining under certain circumstances would be acceptable if it respected "cultural and ecological values."

That was before the Supreme Court ruling. Now, the freshly minted Nemiah Declaration states "there shall be no mining or mining exploration." Period.

Companies and governments can now forget about the "need to consult" – another very vague concept – with this aboriginal group. They don't want any mining, or commercial logging, or road building, without which it is hard to imagine a wage economy being constructed in their rather isolated territory.

So what will their economy be? "Traditional ranching," the declaration says, and "hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering and natural resources." And, of course, a little money for the permits issued to "non-aboriginal" people to visit their territory. The traditional activities are all very noble. In the modern age, they amount to a subsistence economy or something only slightly better. This means government help for a lot of people.

The Tsilhqot'in fought very hard against commercial intrusions in the territory over which they claimed aboriginal title, and they won. They now have de jure autonomy

within British Columbia over about 1,700 square kilometres, a kind of quasi-sovereign state.

Aboriginal title has to be legally affirmed – and a group has to want what the Tsilhqot'in got after the establishment of title – for the Nemiah Declaration to become a template for other British Columbia aboriginals.

The declaration will be heralded by some aboriginal groups, by aboriginal law professors and activists as a turning point in Canadian history.

Many aboriginal groups in B.C. don't want this kind of future for their children: pristine and poor. Young chiefs want a piece of potential action. It will take many years to see which vision prevails.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/on-land-title-which-road-will-aboriginal-groups-take/article23878683/>

## **Governments, First Nations disagree on solution to B.C. treaty process**

DIRK MEISSNER

VICTORIA — The Canadian Press

Published Sunday, Apr. 12 2015, 9:57 PM EDT

Last updated Sunday, Apr. 12 2015, 10:01 PM EDT

There is easy agreement between First Nations and the British Columbia and federal governments that treaty negotiations are languishing, expensive and fraught with obstacles, but all sides have completely different views on how to solve the trouble.

The agony and ecstasy of the maligned and saluted treaty process was on full display last week when hundreds of cheering people witnessed the signing of an agreement-in-principle on a southern Vancouver Island treaty after 20 years of talks.

Premier Christy Clark's Liberals refused to appoint former provincial cabinet minister George Abbott as the new chief of the B.C. Treaty Commission – the overseer of the federal, provincial and First Nations negotiation process – suggesting changes must be made.

Federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt is digesting a report from federal envoy Doug Eyford that recommends Ottawa approach treaties with a sense of urgency and consider which talks are progressing and which should be dumped.

B.C.'s First Nations Summit, the province's largest aboriginal organization, wants Ottawa and B.C. treaty negotiators to come to the table with the power to make decisions rather than being forced to retreat to back rooms for approval of every move.

That convoluted plot line was evident at the signing ceremony Thursday when drums pounded, singers chanted and chiefs choked back tears as they honoured the commitment and sacrifice of leaders who spent years at negotiating tables.

Songhees First Nation Chief Ron Sam described himself as somewhat of a treaty-table rookie, devoting only six years to negotiations. Twenty years to reach a deal is too long, said Mr. Sam.

"These are good faith negotiations, so I think there needs to be some recognition of everybody's role in the whole process and not have it bogged down in political aspects," he said.

First Nations Summit spokeswoman Cheryl Casimer said moves are under way to get the three sides to meet later this month. First Nations will tell the governments they need to pick up their pace if they want to speed up treaty settlements, she said.

"Get some real negotiators," said Ms. Casimer. "Get some real mandates. If we had that at the table we would have far more agreements in place than we have today."

Four treaties have resulted from the modern-day treaty process that was launched in 1993.

British Columbia is the only province that didn't sign treaties with most of its more than 200 First Nations. A handful of bands signed agreements through the so-called Douglas Treaties in the mid-1800s.

"We can't keep people waiting," Ms. Casimer said. "We're talking about peoples lives here."

B.C. Aboriginal Relations Minister John Rustad said the current treaty process is in need of an overhaul where deals no longer take decades to achieve.

"I think each side has to look in the mirror a little bit in terms of how they've contributed to this not being successful," he said. "It's something all parties need to be thinking about in terms of how we build whatever process will be going forward."

Mr. Rustad said B.C. has achieved success with a stepping-stone approach to treaty making that involves reaching a series of smaller economic and land agreements that could eventually set the stage for final treaties.

"I believe a process to reach long-term reconciliation can be founded in that type of approach," he said.

MP Mark Strahl, Mr. Valcourt's parliamentary secretary, said his government plans to consult widely among First Nations about Mr. Eyford's report, but he suggested the federal government isn't about to make immediate changes to the process.

"Certainly Mr. Eyford has identified some concerns," said Mr. Strahl who attended the Island treaty ceremony. "We realize there are obstacles to the process, but this is a reminder that through patient negotiation we can achieve these milestones."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/governments-first-nations-disagree-on-solution-to-bc-treaty-process/article23893256/>

## Nicola Valley First Nation supporters occupy Premier Christy Clark's office

By [Neetu Garcha](#) Reporter Global News, April 15, 2015 5:38 pm



WEST KELOWNA – Nicola Valley First Nation Chief's and supporters are occupying Premier Christy Clark's constituency office in West Kelowna over the province's apparent inaction on the issue of bio waste being trucked into their community. [Protests](#) have been held for several weeks near Merritt [fighting back](#) against the decision to truck what they call 'sewage sludge' from the Fraser Valley and the Interior to the Nicola Valley. Now, they've decided to take their efforts to a new level.

"The Nicola Valley First Nations hold and exercise Aboriginal Title and Rights over areas where bio waste operations are currently being carried out, and where future bio waste operations have been proposed," says Nicola Valley First Nation Chief Aaron Sam.

Sam says all five chiefs of the Nicola Valley First Nation, their representatives and supporters of Friends of the Nicola Valley are all occupying Premier Clark's office. He says their mission is to stop the toxic waste from going into the Nicola Valley area.

“The bio waste operations affect our Aboriginal Title and Rights. The Province of British Columbia is obligated to consult and accommodate us in relation to the impacts of bio waste operations on our Rights and Title,” explains Sam.

He says the group is requesting an immediate moratorium on all importation of the sewage sludge into the Nicola Valley. Sewage sludge is the by-product produced during the treatment of waste.

However, it is now known as bio-solids, which are digested sewage solids said to be rich in nutrients. It has been spread on farmland for many years. However, many residents in the Nicola Valley want to stop to practise from happening, especially so close to their homes and water supply.

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/1940972/nicola-valley-first-nation-supporters-occupy-premier-christy-clarks-office/>

## **First Nation files lawsuit that could block Windmill development**

[Elizabeth Payne, Ottawa Citizen More from Elizabeth Payne, Ottawa Citizen](#)

Published on: April 15, 2015

Last Updated: April 15, 2015 5:22 PM EDT

Windmill Development is planning a major multi-use residential, commercial and retail development for the 40-acre site encompassing Albert and Chaudière islands and part of the Gatineau shoreline.

An Algonquin First Nation from Ontario has filed a law suit that could shut down development of the former Domtar lands on Chaudière and Albert islands, among other things, as part of a wide-ranging claim against numerous defendants.

A statement of claim filed by Stacy Amikwabi on behalf of the Amikwabi Nation and Algonquins in Ontario and Quebec covers sacred sites, development, consultation and hunting rights. It names Windmill Development Group Ltd., Domtar Inc., the National Capital Commission and the City of Ottawa and the federal and provincial governments among defendants as well as the Algonquins of Ontario. The legal proceeding is set to be heard in Ontario Superior Court in Toronto on July 13 and 14.

Windmill Development is planning a major multi-use residential, commercial and retail development for the 40-acre site encompassing Albert and Chaudière islands and part of the Gatineau shoreline. The development, which it has named Zibi — the Algonquin word for river — is opposed by the former chief of Quebec’s Kitigan Zibi reserve, Gilbert Whiteduck, and a group that includes architect Douglas Cardinal, who designed the nearby Museum of History. Cardinal has designed a First Nations healing and

reconciliation centre, in keeping with the vision of Algonquin elder William Commanda, for part of the site.

Among other things, the statement of claim asks the court to order that sacred sites, including Chaudière and Albert islands, be placed under the stewardship and control of the Algonquin/Amikwha/Nipissing Nation.

Michael Swinwood, the lawyer representing Stacy Amikwabi, said his client and the Algonquins he represents don't recognize Algonquin band councils in Ontario and Quebec currently involved in historic land claim negotiations.

Algonquin groups in Ontario and Kitigan Zibi were approached by Windmill about the planned development. Windmill officials have said they plan to work closely with First Nations, who consider the area around Chaudière Falls historic and sacred.

Swinwood said the statement of claim has been met with a flurry of motions from the defendants named in the case asking that it be dismissed before it reaches court, saying the plaintiff doesn't have a legitimate claim to the land.

Swinwood said the Tsilhqot'in First Nation ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada last year, supports the claim. In Tsilhqot'in, the court agreed that the semi-nomadic First Nation, a group of six aboriginal bands, had title to lands. The case was considered a game changer for many First Nations in land disputes.

"My view is that we have a legitimate plaintiff, that we have a legitimate claim, and that we should have it treated in a legitimate way," said Swinwood.

**Direct Link:** <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/first-nation-files-lawsuit-to-block-windmill-development>

## **Advocacy groups, celebs pledge support for Clyde River court appeal**

**"The federal government needs to understand that Indigenous peoples have the right to make their own decisions"**

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, April 16, 2015 - 1:01 pm





Residents of Clyde river took to the streets in July 2014 to protest the National Energy Board's approval of seismic testing in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait. (FILE PHOTO)

More than 40 advocacy groups and individuals have come together to support the Inuit of Clyde River in the community's fight to stop seismic testing in Baffin Bay.

A network of environmental, labour and Indigenous rights groups have formed the Clyde River Solidarity Network and signed a statement in support of [the Nunavut hamlet's court appeal to stop offshore seismic testing](#).

Signatures include those of author and activist Naomi Klein and Xena the Warrior Princess actress Lucy Lawless.

The April 16 statement calls the surveys "a clear and direct violation of international protection for the human rights of Inuit as Indigenous peoples."

The group disputes a 2014 National Energy Board decision to approve a proposal to conduct offshore seismic surveys near Baffin Island, schedule to start in 2015's ice-free season.

Inuit in Clyde River — and their supporters — fear that those surveys, which would use a loud underwater air cannon to map oil and gas reserves, could disturb and threaten marine animal populations in the region — a source of livelihood for many in Nunavut.

Now, the hamlet of Clyde River has gone to the Federal Court of Appeal to review the NEB's decision, in a hearing that will take place April 20 in Toronto.

The network calls on the federal government to reverse the NEB's decision, "and to ensure that no further permits for petroleum exploration development in Nunavut are granted unless Inuit rights are fully protected, including the right to grant or withhold free, prior and informed consent for such development."

"The federal government needs to understand that Indigenous peoples have the right to make their own decisions about their lives and futures," said Craig Benjamin from Amnesty International Canada, in the network's April 16 release.

The same network is planning a public rally outside of the court in Toronto on the day the case is being heard — April 20, at noon.

Jerry Natanine, the mayor of Clyde River, is in Toronto to attend the court hearing, where he thanked the network for its support.

“It’s really important for our people to know that they are not alone as we stand up for our rights,” Natanine said in the release.

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674advocacy\\_groups\\_celebs\\_pledge\\_support\\_for\\_clyde\\_river\\_court\\_appeal/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674advocacy_groups_celebs_pledge_support_for_clyde_river_court_appeal/)

## **Aboriginals can sue over property rights: appeal court**



Chief Archie Patrick, of the Stelat'en First Nation, speaks during a news conference in Vancouver, B.C., on Dec. 5, 2013. (Darryl Dyck / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

Tamsyn Burgmann, The Canadian Press

Published Wednesday, April 15, 2015 11:37PM EDT

Last Updated Thursday, April 16, 2015 12:19AM EDT

VANCOUVER -- Industrial giants, from forestry companies to mining operations, must respect aboriginal territorial claims in British Columbia just as they would heed the rights of any other Canadian landowner, the province's highest court has ruled.

A decision from the B.C. Court of Appeal paves the way for First Nations to launch lawsuits to protect their territory from private parties, even without proving aboriginal title.

Two northwestern First Nations expressed vindication on Wednesday after a panel of three judges overturned a lower court ruling that denied them opportunity to sue the aluminum producer Rio Tinto Alcan.

The Saik'uz and Stellat'en First Nations, based downstream of the company's Kenney hydroelectric dam and reservoir, were refused a trial on the premise that aboriginals must first establish their title. Their initial suit was mounted in September 2011.

The nations contend the dam, in operation since the 1950s, causes nuisance and breaches their rights to the natural waterway that runs through their land. They're seeking damages for property-rights violations, alleging the electricity generator has harmed the Nechako River system and its fisheries.

The decision means they can now take their claims to trial.

"We are pleased that the Court of Appeal recognized that First Nations' aboriginal title exists, prior to proof in court or treaties with government," Stellat'en Chief Archie Patrick said in a news release.

He said the decision grants aboriginals the same private-law protections as other individual landowners.

"Our peoples are determined to continue to seek justice for our rights and the Nechako River," he said.

The Kenney dam provides water for Rio Tinto's power generation facility that's used by its aluminum smelter located in Kitimat.

Rio Tinto Alcan has 60 days to apply for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. A spokesman said the company is reviewing the decision.

The judge who wrote the decision said that the law is clear that Aboriginal rights "do exist prior to declaration or recognition."

Justice David Tysoe wrote that setting a separate standard for Aboriginal people, before they can sue other parties to enforce their rights, is arguably inconsistent with the charter right to equality.

"Aboriginal people are part of Canada's community, and they should not be treated disadvantageously in comparison to any other litigant asserting claims...," he wrote.

Lawyer Gregory McDade, who represents the two First Nations, said there's been no previous case law on aboriginal title and called the decision significant.

"I would put it on the level of the Haida decision and the Tsilhqot'in decision in terms of moving the law forward so that aboriginal rights are recognized like other Canadian legal rights."

The Haida ruling, in 2004, established that Crown has a duty to consult with First Nations regarding land use. The more-recent Tsilhqot'in decision is a landmark ruling in which

the Supreme Court of Canada recognized aboriginal title to a specific tract of land for the first time in the country's history.

That decision, last June, concluded a 25-year-long legal battle.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/aboriginals-can-sue-over-property-rights-appeal-court-1.2329646>

## **Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women**

### **Finding solutions for families of missing and murdered indigenous women**

**Krista Shore shares how she overcame a life of violence after her mother was murdered**

By Ntawnis Piapot, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 10, 2015 5:30 AM CT Last Updated: Apr 10, 2015 5:30 AM CT



Krista Shore in front of the Regina house where her mother was found murdered in 1996. (Ntawnis Piapot/CBC)

Krista Shore stands in front of the home where her mother was found brutally murdered 19 years ago. Shore was only 12 years old when it happened. She remembers vividly that she was sitting on a couch in the home of her grandmother, which was just next door, just before hearing the horrific news.

"No one was willing to tell me what happened to my mother. I ran into that house — past everybody and seen the scene of the crime," Shore recalled.

"It was horrible," she said of what she encountered. "There was nothing but blood all over and where my mom lay was soaked in blood."



From 1996, Krista Shore and her grandmother talk to police after Shore's mother was found dead. (CBC)

Her brother and father were originally suspects in her mother's murder. Shore's uncle, Brent Victor Daniels, was eventually convicted of second degree murder and sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole for 17 years. It took the jury only two and half hours to decide his fate.

"The judge said in sentencing that in all his years [as a judge] he has never come across a case so horrific," Shore said of the circumstances of the crime.

Barbara Ann Shore was 39 years old when she was killed. She was the mother to four children and had dreams of becoming a teaching assistant or working with children. Shore said her mother was a loving and kind woman who was always helpful and generous.

"My mother loved us deeply," she said. "She tried hard."



A family photo of Barbara Ann Shore with her son and a nephew. (Submitted to CBC)

## Life after death

After her mother's death, Shore said she fell into what she calls an abyss.

"I was a 12 year old girl writing my mom's obituary and making her funeral arrangements and plans and that was very hard for me to have to do," she said.

For the next 12 years Shore said she lived a transient lifestyle filled with alcohol, drugs and gangs. The desperation of her situation hit her when she was 24 and her two eldest children were apprehended by social services. Grief stricken, Shore decided to quit drugs and change her life.

Shore is now 32 and has been sober for the past seven years. She has also had two more daughters, Arayah, five, and Sequoia, four.



Krista Shore with her daughters Arayah and Sequoia. (Ntawnis Piapot/CBC)

## Shore working with Circle of Courage



She says embracing her culture and her role as a mother helped her change her life for the better.

"That's my challenge and my honour in this life is to be able to, you know, role model a healthy way of living to my young children so that they're not going to be vulnerable," she said.

Shore has been running a women's group in North Central called Circle of Courage for the past four years. It's a cultural program meant to help at risk indigenous women.

"I really want to empower people to stand up for their rights, know who they are [and] where they come from," she said. "[To] feel good about that and heal when they need to heal."

Shore noted the issue of missing and murdered women has affected every aspect of her life.

She added she is on a life long journey of healing and sharing her story is like medicine for her. Every time she shares her experience, she feels empowered.

"It took me one heck of a journey to come to a position of self determination and now that I have that self determination, I will not let anybody take that power away from me," she said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/finding-solutions-for-families-of-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-1.3027412>

## **Aboriginals behind most female aboriginal homicides, RCMP says**

**A letter from RCMP commissioner Bob Paulson confirms 70 per cent of offenders in solved police cases were First Nations.**



Dawn Harvard, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, responded to the RCMP statistic by asking: "How does that make it less of a tragedy?"

**By:** The Canadian Press, Published on Fri Apr 10 2015

EDMONTON—The head of the [Assembly of First Nations](#) says it's important to know that 70 per cent of aboriginal females killed in cases solved by police have died at the hands of other aboriginals.

"Now that the information is out, what do we do with it?" national Chief [Perry Bellegarde](#) said Friday in an interview from Regina.

"We all have to start putting our heads and minds and hearts together to start planning the strategies . . . to end violence amongst men, amongst women in our communities."

[RCMP](#) commissioner Bob Paulson released the statistic in a letter obtained by The Canadian Press. The letter is addressed to Chief Bernice Martial of Cold Lake First Nation in Alberta, who is also grand chief of Treaty 6.

Martial had asked Paulson to verify the number, questioning whether the figure, earlier spoken of by Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt, was accurate.

"The consolidated data from the nearly 300 contributing police agencies has confirmed that 70 per cent of the offenders were of aboriginal origin, 25 per cent were non-aboriginal and 5 per cent were of unknown ethnicity," Paulson wrote.

"However, it is not the ethnicity of the offender that is relevant, but rather the relationship between the victim and offender that guides our focus with respect to prevention."

He said most female homicides, across all races, are linked to family and spousal violence. About 62 per cent of aboriginal women and 74 per cent of non-aboriginal women are killed by a spouse, intimate relation or family member.

The RCMP doesn't typically release data related to race, said Paulson, because it can stigmatize vulnerable populations. He suggested it was fine to release what Valcourt already had.

Dawn Harvard, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, said she doesn't understand why Paulson released the figure.

"I feel like saying, 'So what?' How does that make it less of a concern? How does that make it less of a tragedy?"

While the released data may help point in a direction of needed community programs, there's still a need for a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women, Harvard said.

The RCMP issued a report in 2014 that put the total of missing and murdered aboriginal women at 1,181 (164 missing, 1,017 murdered) between 1980 and 2012.

Although indigenous women make up 4 per cent of the Canadian population, the report found they accounted for 16 per cent of female homicides and 11 per cent of missing women.

The federal government has refused calls for an inquiry, saying it is more interested in taking action than studying the issue.

Everyone — aboriginal men and governments included — need to take responsibility to combat violence, Bellegarde said.

It's a complicated issue linked to poverty, addiction, high incarceration rates and, in the end, abuse in residential schools that previous generations endured, Bellegarde said.

"You're not whole as a human being when you come out of that system, and then, now you're trying to raise a family and trying to have a healthy relationship when you don't even know how to love," he said.

"The violence in our communities has become so normal and it's not normal. And that's what we've got to start breaking."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/04/10/aboriginals-behind-most-female-aboriginal-homicides-rcmp-says.html>

## **Six Alberta First Nations chiefs call on RCMP for clarification of aboriginal offender statistic**

By Otiena Ellwand, Edmonton Journal April 10, 2015

EDMONTON -The Grand Chief of the Confederacy of Treaty Six Nations said she is “shocked” and “appalled” after RCMP revealed this week that in its review of solved cases of murdered aboriginal women, 70 per cent of the offenders are indigenous.

Bernice Martial, also chief of the Cold Lake First Nation, said she believes the information is “inaccurate and untrue” and she would like to see the RCMP’s methodology and data in its entirety.

“I know for a fact there are a lot of native men that are very respectful and to label them that way. Seventy per cent of what? The whole? All I want is answers, I want facts,” she said.

Martial and leaders from five other First Nations in Alberta held a joint news conference in Edmonton Friday afternoon after RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson confirmed the statistic to Martial in a letter made public on Thursday. Paulson sent the letter after Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Bernard Valcourt cited the 70 per cent figure in a private meeting with First Nations chiefs in Alberta last month.

The statistic was not released in the RCMP’s May 2014 report on missing and murdered aboriginal women, which used data obtained from 300 police agencies.

That report reviewed 1,181 police-recorded incidents of murdered aboriginal women and unresolved missing aboriginal women.

Of the 1,017 aboriginal female homicides it examined from 1980 to 2012, close to 90 per cent were solved. Most of the murders were committed by men and most of the perpetrators knew their victims, the report said.

Paulson said in his letter to Martial that the reason the force did not previously disclose the ethnicity of the offender is because “it is not the ethnicity of the offender that is relevant, but rather the relationship between the victim and offender that guides our focus with respect to prevention,” he wrote.

Paulson added that such a disclosure had the potential to “stigmatize and marginalize vulnerable populations.”

While the chiefs said the statistic may be flawed or misinterpreted without context, they said they would rather have known about it when the report was released last year.

“Why wouldn’t they give us that information? We’re a very strong people and we’re resilient and this is no different. Give us the information so we can help, why keep it from us? It’s isolating us all over again,” said Kurt Burnstick, chief of Alexander First Nation, on Friday.

“It’s a slap in the face to the chiefs of every nation, that we’re finding this out after the fact.”

The head of the Assembly of First Nations Perry Bellegarde said that now that the information is out, people need to find a way to move forward.

“We all have to start putting our heads and minds and hearts together to start planning the strategies ... to end violence amongst men, amongst women in our communities,” he said in an interview from Regina.

The six Alberta chiefs are calling for Valcourt to resign and are asking other First Nations to stand with them.

Neither the RCMP nor Valcourt’s office responded to requests for comment.

*-With files from Douglas Quan, Postmedia News and The Canadian Press*

**Direct Link:**

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Alberta+First+Nations+chiefs+call+RCMP+clarification+aboriginal+offender+statistic/10962541/story.html>

## **Yukon First Nations hope display can bring healing**

**The travelling display will be at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre until April 25**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 12, 2015 10:19 AM CT Last Updated: Apr 12, 2015 10:45 AM CT



The Walking With Our Sisters website says more than 1,181 indigenous women and girls in Canada have been reported missing or murdered in the last 30 years. (Shinoah Young)

A group of Yukon women contributed beading to the approximately 1,800 moccasin tops in the Walking With Our Sisters installation that opened Saturday at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre in Whitehorse.

The display is a commemoration to honour the lives of missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada. The moccasin tops in the installation were left deliberately unfinished to represent the unfinished lives of these women.

Organizers say there are more than 39 documented cases of missing and murdered indigenous women in the Yukon.

## **'Bring you peace'**

Florence Moses from Na-Cho Nyak Dun First Nation in Mayo hopes the display will bring healing to some.

"If you're coming to see it as a visitor, I just want people to feel compassion," she says.

"And for family members, I'm just hoping that they come and they have a loving environment to come walk with the sisters. Let their emotions be felt. I'm not sure if it's going to bring you closure — but to bring you peace."

The display will be in Whitehorse until April 25 but the territory will keep a permanent reminder of it. Ten locally sewn pieces will be put on display at the cultural centre later this spring.

The Walking With Our Sisters installation has been on display in several locations since the fall of 2013.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-first-nations-hope-display-can-bring-healing-1.3029549>

## **AFN's Bellegarde wants meeting with top Mountie over unreleased Indigenous women data**

[National News](#) | April 13, 2015 by [APTN National News](#) |





***APTN National News***

**OTTAWA**—Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde is requesting a meeting with RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson to discuss still undisclosed information held by the Mounties on murdered and missing Indigenous women.

The letter, dated Saturday, follows a statement issued by Bellegarde Friday calling on the RCMP to release data that backs up Paulson's statement that Indigenous perpetrators are responsible for 70 per cent of the solved murdered of Indigenous women.

[Paulson made the statement in a letter to Treaty 6 Grand Chief Bernice Martial](#) which was released last Thursday by Status of Women Minister Kellie Leitch's office. Paulson's letter backed Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt who faced a backlash after he mentioned the 70 per cent statistic during a closed-door meeting in Calgary with several chiefs, including Martial, at the end of March.

In his own letter to Paulson, Bellegarde said the RCMP should have initially shared the information with First Nations.

"It is unacceptable that the RCMP and the federal government did not inform First Nations leadership of this information," said Bellegarde, in the letter. "There is a long history of mistrust of police by First Nations and citizens. Withholding information only serves to damage relationships and foster suspicion, especially when that information is shared with government agencies or representatives who seem willing to use that information against First Nations to deny or diminish the action required."



In the letter, Bellegarde also calls on the RCMP and the Harper government to release all “relevant” information related to murdered and missing Indigenous women to First Nations and the AFN. He then requests a meeting with Paulson “at the earliest opportunity.”

Part of the information the RCMP holds on murdered and missing Indigenous women comes from about 300 police forces and Statistics Canada. The RCMP signed agreements with Statistics Canada and the police agencies allowing it to obtain the information under certain conditions, including not disclosing the raw data publicly without the consent of the other parties.

Paulson also broke the RCMP’s “bias-free policing policy” when he confirmed the 70 per cent statistic. The RCMP initially said it would not be releasing ethnically-based information on perpetrators. Paulson confirmed the statistics as Valcourt faced increased criticism and calls for his resignation following his meeting in Calgary when he first mentioned the 70 per cent number.

Valcourt has previously publicly stated First Nation men were responsible for the majority of violence against First Nations women.



The [RCMP released its first report on murdered and missing Indigenous women](#) last spring, but it did not provide any data on the ethnicity of perpetrators. The RCMP is expected to release a second report on the subject in May.

An RCMP spokesperson said Paulson would be responding to Bellegarde’s letter.

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/04/13/afns-bellegarde-wants-meeting-top-mountie-unreleased-indigenous-women-data/>

**National Post View: RCMP should not be hoarding useful data on aboriginal violence**



Information is key to problem-solving, and when it comes to missing and murdered aboriginal women and men, we've far too little of it.

The cat is out of the bag. RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson had hoped to avoid divulging this salacious information, but Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt let it slip in a speech, so Paulson was forced to reveal the shocking truth to a native chief, and by now the secret is all over the media: 70 per cent of murdered aboriginal women are killed by (wait for it) another aboriginal person.

Seventy per cent of the perpetrators in Canada's cases of murdered and missing aboriginal women are indigenous, the RCMP commissioner has confirmed.

The suggestion was first made last month by Bernard Valcourt, the aboriginal affairs minister, in a private meeting with First Nations chiefs in Alberta. Aboriginal leaders questioned the veracity of the number because a report last year from the RCMP about those cases did not specify perpetrators' ethnicity.

But in a letter made public Thursday, RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson said data obtained from 300 police agencies "has confirmed that 70 per cent of the offenders were of aboriginal origin."

Well, of course this is neither shocking nor controversial. The RCMP's report into missing and murdered aboriginal women, released last year, found 92 per cent of victims were killed by a spouse, family member or other acquaintance. It only stood to reason that most of their killers would be of the same race. It's also unsurprising because women in general are overwhelmingly killed by people they know — 93 per cent for non-aboriginal women, 92 per cent for aboriginal women, according to the RCMP report. And it's unsurprising because Canadians of either sex are overwhelmingly killed by people they know — 84 per cent, on average.

Not to say that aboriginal women do not face specific risks, but the debate over how to protect them features a maddening tendency to treat the phenomena involved as somehow mysterious or unique to those women when, in the main, they clearly are not.

Between 1997 and 2000, while Robert Pickton was on the prowl in Vancouver, aboriginal women were seven times more likely to be murdered than non-aboriginal women; aboriginal men, likewise, were seven times more likely to be murdered than non-aboriginal men. And aboriginal men were more two-and-a-quarter times as likely to be murdered as aboriginal women. That's another completely unsurprising statistic — men are murdered more often than women, period — though one that has been resolutely overlooked throughout this debate.

We know what correlates with homicide, and indeed with crime in general

It is perplexing that this far into the discussion of missing and murdered aboriginal women, we are still coming to terms with utterly basic facts and what they mean. As such it's infuriating that the RCMP should be hoarding useful data. It may think it's helping — keeping the focus where it ostensibly belongs. It is in fact a great hindrance to informed discussion and good policymaking. It should publish the data it has and let the debate unfold as it will.

We know what correlates with homicide, and indeed with crime in general: youth, poverty, joblessness, lack of education, addiction, poor and crowded living conditions, broken families, social isolation. That paints a picture of far too many aboriginal Canadians, and there is no solution to “missing and murdered aboriginal women,” or the vastly greater number of aboriginal men dying violent deaths, that does not involve addressing those core underlying ills. The good news is that some, notably education, are improving markedly. And indeed the rate of homicide among aboriginal women has fallen considerably over the past 15 years — from 7.6 per 100,000 according to the 1996 General Social Survey, to 4.45 in 2011.

We know that because somebody measured it and published the findings. Information is key to problem-solving, and when it comes to missing and murdered aboriginal women and men, we've far too little of it.

**Direct Link:** <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/national-post-view-rcmp-should-not-be-hoarding-useful-data-on-aboriginal-violence>

## **Fort Chipewyan chief says RCMP report leaves more unanswered questions**

By [Vincent McDermott](#)

Monday, April 13, 2015 4:28:39 MDT PM



Mikisew Cree First Nation Chief Steve Courtoreille speaks during a question and answer session with Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Mikisew Cree First Nation and the University of Manitoba. Codie McLachlan/Postmedia Network

A report from the RCMP on missing and murdered aboriginal women has left the chiefs of Treaty 8 First Nations with more questions than answers.

Last week, RCMP revealed that, in its review of solved cases of murdered and missing aboriginal women, 70% of the offenders were aboriginal. This confirmed [statements Valcourt made to chiefs during a closed-door meeting in Calgary last month](#).

Steve Courtoreille, Grand Chief of Treaty 8 and chief of the Mikisew Cree First Nation, says he is concerned with the way the RCMP have handled this information.

The Fort Chipewyan-based chief questioned why the RCMP has released the ethnic background in cases involving aboriginal women but not with other ethnic backgrounds, and why these numbers were omitted from the RCMP's report released last year.

That report, released last May, said more than 90% of murdered aboriginal women in solved cases, knew their killers. It also found aboriginal women were more likely to be murdered by a casual acquaintance, and less often to be killed by a current or former spouse. RCMP reviewed 1,181 police-recorded incidents of murdered aboriginal women and unresolved missing women cases.

In a letter to Treaty 6 First Nation Grand Chief Bernice Martial, RCMP commissioner Bob Paulson said the RCMP previously would not release ethnic backgrounds of offenders because "it is not the ethnicity of the offender that is relevant, but rather the relationship between the victim and offender that guides our focus with respect to prevention," and feared such data could "stigmatize and marginalize vulnerable populations."

Courtoreille fears that damage has already been done with the release of this information, and could distract Canadians from social and economic issues many aboriginals face in Canada.

“It’s not only First Nation communities that need to be addressed with cases of missing and murdered women,” said Courtoreille.

But meeting with aboriginal affairs is problematic for Courtoreille. The leadership of Treaty 8 First Nation, which encompasses much of the oilsands, is refusing to meet with the ministry unless Valcourt is removed from his cabinet post. In a letter sent last week to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Courtoreille described Valcourt’s behaviour during the meeting as “rude, demeaning, blaming, and condescending.”

Courtoreille says these questions have not been answered by the police or federal government. Both the RCMP and Valcourt’s office did not return requests for comment.

“His total attitude was like he didn’t care. A person of that nature, saying it’s purely a First Nation problem, is part of the problem,” said Courtoreille.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/2015/04/13/fort-chipewyan-chief-says-rcmp-report-leaves-more-unanswered-questions>

## Why indigenous women are victims

Posted: 04/13/2015 7:25 PM |

The RCMP made the deliberate decision in May last year not to release the fact 70 per cent of the 1,017 murdered aboriginal women were killed by an aboriginal perpetrator. The offenders are almost all men, and the crimes are happening primarily in an urban centre.

Most people would see this as an important detail, given the tense, warring views on who is killing Canada’s indigenous women and girls, and why.

RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson says the detail was omitted from the report into the murdered and missing women and girls because the force practises bias-free policing — race does not enter into how the RCMP investigates crime and charges suspects.

Canada’s task is to cut the high levels of violence against indigenous girls and women. To do that, this country must look at the roots of violence and the factors conspiring against aboriginal people. This, contrary to Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s obtuse view, is a sociological problem that demands a social, political and economic response.

But refusing to disclose the details of these crimes means people in positions of authority have decided the rest of Canada can’t be trusted with the facts.

It discounts the role of ordinary Canadians in a critical discussion about the causes and solutions to a pressing social issue.

Yet, since Mr. Paulson revealed the data to a First Nations chief — pressed to do so after Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt made similar statements weeks ago — many people, particularly in the aboriginal community, have condemned the move. They say it simply feeds into the racist views aboriginal people are inherently violent and prone to commit crime. That fear is justified. Just check out the string of odious, bigoted comments tagged to media stories about social issues involving First Nations people.

Anyone who believes aboriginal people are inherently violent is ignorant to the facts and has not paid attention to the contentious, but hopeful, examinations of the lingering impact of colonialism and racist policies on Canada's indigenous people. Facts can dispel that ignorance.

Time to reframe the discussion. Time to focus on relevant details.

For example, the RCMP report dispelled the notion aboriginal women and girls are more likely to be victims because of their high-risk lifestyles, a shorthand for prostitution. Wrong; only 12 per cent of aboriginal victims were involved in the sex trade (five per cent of non-aboriginal women).

As with non-aboriginal women, indigenous victims were most likely to have been murdered in a residence. Non-aboriginal women were more likely to be killed by a spouse, while indigenous women were more at risk from acquaintances. Other family members, and strangers, were equally likely to be offenders.

In Australia, the government has made an effort to collect detailed data on the perpetrators and the victims in the indigenous community. Programs have been created out of that information.

Canada, however, has become averse to examining race/ethnicity in crime, in part because of the legitimate belief social and economic policy targeting poverty and marginalization is a better pathway.

Poverty is a strong indicator for who becomes involved in the justice system; aboriginal victims, and their murderers, were more likely to be unemployed and to be on social assistance.

Canadians both in aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities must confront all the factors that put indigenous women and girls at high risk of violence.

This can't be done by turning a blind eye to critical details. The RCMP gave the country a useful start in understanding who, where and how the aboriginal women became victims. The real question is why. Most of the offenders were aboriginal men. The solutions lie in talking to them, too.



1. *Editorials are the consensus view of the Winnipeg Free Press' editorial board, comprising Catherine Mitchell, David O'Brien, Shannon Sampert, and Paul Samyn.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/editorials/Why-indigenous-women-are-victims-299632871.html>

## Statistic on killers of aboriginal women at best 'unhelpful,' at worst 'offensive,' say advocates

By [Dene Moore](#) / [Daily Brew](#) – 23 hours ago



RCMP says 7 of 10 female aboriginal homicides committed by aboriginal offenders

The federal government is trying to abdicate responsibility for the high number of aboriginal women who have been murdered or gone missing in Canada by blaming First Nations, say advocates for a public inquiry.

RCMP Comm. Bob Paulson confirmed Friday a statistic first cited by Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt in a closed-door meeting with chiefs last month: that [70 per cent of murdered Aboriginal women whose cases have been solved were killed by other Aboriginal people](#).

It's a statistic in line with female homicides in any ethnic group, says Dawn Harvard, acting president of the Native Women's Association of Canada. Most women are killed by people known to them.

"That's just a general pattern that holds true for everybody. The real issue here is not the ethnicity of the offender," Harvard tells Yahoo Canada News.

"It's not only irrelevant but it's offensive that it's being used as an excuse not to address the issue, to minimize the concern for our women."

An [RCMP report released last year](#) that found at least 1,181 Indigenous women and girls were murdered or went missing in Canada between 1980 and 2012.

That report did not say how many murders were committed by aboriginal perpetrators.

What it did say was that most homicides of aboriginal and non-aboriginal women were committed by men and most of the perpetrators knew their victims.

“Female homicide victims generally know the person who kills them – more than 90 per cent had a previous relationship with them. This is true for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal female victims,” the report said.

Aboriginal women were more likely to be murdered by an acquaintance – 30 per cent compared to 29 per cent of non-aboriginal women. Yet they were less likely to be killed by a spouse – 29 per cent, compared to 41 per cent, the report says.

It is unacceptable that RCMP and the federal government waited until this late stage of the discussion on missing and murdered Indigenous women to release this information, says the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

“The level of violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls, and the inadequate measures taken to protect, investigate and prosecute, is a national crisis,” Perry Bellegarde writes in a letter to Paulson.

“The RCMP and federal government must work with First Nations to address this as a priority. An obvious place to start is sharing information, data and analysis.”

Both the national police force and the federal government were part of a national roundtable on the issue in February, Bellegarde points out.

“There is a long history of mistrust of police by First Nations and citizens,” he writes. “Withholding information only serves to damage relationships and foster suspicion, especially when that information is shared with government agencies or representatives who seem willing to use that information against First Nations to deny or diminish the action required.”

Bellegarde requested a meeting with the RCMP commissioner.

In a statement, he says the federal government must recognize the root causes of poverty and work with First Nations to address the poor conditions and lack of supports available for Indigenous Canadians, including men’s health programs.

Harvard points out many, if not most, of the women on the list of murdered and missing were not killed on reserves, she points out, but were living in urban centres.

“They may be First Nations people but this isn’t an on-reserve issue,” she says.

Ted Palys, a criminologist at Simon Fraser University, says there is a lot of missing data on missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada.

Releasing this statistic without further information on how they came up with it or what proportion of cases have conclusive evidence “especially given the political ramifications of this statistic, is not helpful,” Palys tells Yahoo Canada News.

“In terms of the implications for an inquiry, Prime Minister Harper’s justification for not holding one has been that ‘this is not a sociological problem.’ The RCMP statistic and all the questions it raises suggest even more strongly that there are strong sociological dimensions to the problem and hence that his justification does not hold water,” Palys says.

Advocates continue to press for a full public inquiry.

**Direct Link:** <https://ca.news.yahoo.com/blogs/dailybrew/statistic-on-killers-of-aboriginal-women-at-best-163119659.html>

## **True crimes, faulty statistics and Aboriginal women**

**Colby Cosh on deciphering data on missing and murdered Aboriginal women**

[Colby Cosh](#)

April 16, 2015



How the heck did [Bernard Valcourt](#) get himself into a fix like this? In a March 20 closed-door meeting with a group of western First Nations band and region chiefs, the federal Aboriginal affairs minister apparently got defensive when the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women came up. Valcourt pointed out that an estimated 70 per cent of murders of indigenous women are perpetrated by indigenous men.

The chiefs knew that there was no such finding in [the RCMP's "operational overview"](#) of the topic issued last year. It was, indeed, a noticeable gap in the report. The RCMP had strongly disavowed any ability or desire to make factual assertions about the racial demographics of a subset of murderers. So the chiefs very understandably asked Valcourt where this number had come from, and the minister was left babbling that he would come up with something. Whatever goodwill had been present in the room was gone.

A cynic would say Valcourt had committed a breach of the delicate manners that prevail in face-to-face talks between a minister and the leadership of his clientele. It would be equally valid to say he had failed to show sufficient respect. "Manners" and "showing respect" are two names for the same thing, and it is a thing that cannot be shrugged off by a federal minister of Aboriginal affairs.

Valcourt has since obtained a letter from RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson saying that, yes, there are RCMP data ["confirming" the 70 per cent figure](#). Predictably, that hasn't cooled the controversy: it has only inflamed it.

When the RCMP released its original report on violence against indigenous women, it let the data do the talking. That was both salutary and, from a public relations standpoint, effective. We learned that there is a surprisingly high number of genuinely missing Aboriginal women, few of whom can have disappeared voluntarily. We learned that fatal violence against indigenous women is declining, though not quite as fast as in the rest of the population. The police were careful to note that they solve homicides of Aboriginal women just as often as they do those of other women.

The interpretation of all that information was bound to be contentious. The special problem of "missing and murdered Aboriginal women" does not seem to exist, if by that phrase you mean a statistical interaction that goes beyond Aboriginal-ness and female-ness. The overall risk to Aboriginal women is about what you would infer from just combining the (very high) general Aboriginal exposure to lethal violence with the (much reduced) general female exposure to it. No third, additional element of risk is apparent in the numbers: over the 1980-2012 period covered in the RCMP report, for example, StatsCan estimates that 14 per cent of all female murder victims were Aboriginal, but 17 per cent of male murder victims were.

The lack of a statistical smoking gun makes an emotional debate more complicated—but at least with the original RCMP report, Canadians, Aboriginal and non-, were exposed to the numbers in a properly documented and footnoted form first. Now the government has introduced new data in a discouragingly improvisational way, without the details of how the 70 per cent number for Aboriginal offenders was arrived at.

Some, like [Aboriginal law professor Pamela Palmater](#), are opportunistically nitpicking at the number—and they have every right to to that, as long as the methodology and the accuracy of the figure are undocumented unknowns. It's not really even a question of right. There is just no way for anyone to answer those critics, aside from waving Paulson's letter around.

But other Aboriginal leaders are asking: if the figure is accurate and robust, and if it implies that Aboriginal men have a special responsibility to act on this issue, why did they have to find out from an offhand remark in a meeting? Why did the RCMP pretend not to concern themselves with the identities of perpetrators, then change their minds?

The 70 per cent estimate may turn out to be in the neighbourhood of the truth—the “offender-to-victim relationship” stats for female homicide victims in the original RCMP report suggest that it might not be far off. But there is not much to be made of that number in isolation—is it high? Low? What percentage would be “too” high? The operational overview established that homicides of Aboriginal women aren't committed disproportionately by strangers, so we already knew that protecting those women isn't a matter of breaking up some racial conspiracy or spree-killing gang. Would that it were so simple.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.macleans.ca/society/true-crimes-faulty-statistics-the-data-debate-about-aboriginal-women/>

## Special Topic: Residential Schools

### **Study shows link between continued abuse of aboriginal women, residential schools**

ALLAN MAKI

CALGARY — The Globe and Mail

Published Friday, Apr. 10 2015, 6:00 AM EDT

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Young aboriginal women in B.C. are more likely to be victims of violence if they were sexually abused as children or had a parent who attended a residential school, a landmark study has found.

Researchers for a survey called the Cedar Project say their study to be released on Friday is the first in Canada to show a statistical connection between continued abuse and the residential schools. (B.C. had 22 of them, the most of any Canadian province.)

The Cedar Project interviewed 259 women, ages 14 to 30, several times over seven years. The report says they were “nearly 10 times more likely to be sexually assaulted later in life if they had a history of childhood sexual abuse.” It said the women were also at a high risk if at least one of their parents had spent time at a residential school.

Until the late 20th century, native children were taken from their families and placed in residential schools, where many were beaten and sexually abused. At least 3,000 children died at the schools. Some survivors suffering from the effects of the abuse became abusers themselves.

Of the 259 women recruited from Vancouver and Prince George, B.C., all used drugs, 28 per cent reported that they were sexually assaulted during the seven-year period, and 41 per cent of that group were assaulted more than once.

Researchers from the University of British Columbia’s School of Population and Public Health and the Centre for Health Evaluation and Outcome Sciences tabulated the information.

“Our mothers, wives, sisters, nieces – they have been demeaned and dehumanized,” said Chief Wayne Christian, a Splatshin First Nation leader and project investigator. “The importance of the data is that people may see the numbers, but these are human beings.”

The women in the study were recruited through health-care providers and street contacts and were interviewed every six months. Christina Tom was one of the participants, who was an alcoholic when she began the survey. During the seven year, she fought for her sobriety and to find a stable relationship and has become a spokesperson for other aboriginal women. Despite being HIV positive, Ms. Tom considers herself “one of the lucky ones.”

“My peers are still continuing to self-medicate because of all the traumas they’ve been through,” she said. “Because of me being able to clean up and be sober, I’m a lot stronger than other women are. I’m able to speak on their behalf.”

Aboriginal chiefs in B.C. have already begun attempts to find solutions to some of the issues that arose in the survey. Last year, 54 northern B.C. chiefs passed a resolution to build a child advocacy centre (CAC) for aboriginal young people in Prince George. CAC’s are places that provide all the services abused children need at one location.

The chiefs visited former NHL hockey player Sheldon Kennedy, a survivor of sexual abuse who founded a CAC in Calgary.

Mr. Kennedy said he is confident a centre structured around aboriginal culture and spiritual beliefs would help keep abused kids from following in their parents' footsteps.

"We have a clear picture now of the cycle of abuse and the violence that it leads to," Mr. Kennedy said. "Now we're learning how to deal with it."

Chief Christian said he supports the idea of a CAC. He said that as a 10-year-old, he knew what it was like to be sexually, physically and emotionally abused. At 12, he said, he and his 10 brothers and sisters were apprehended by Child Welfare officials and put in foster homes. At 13, he was suicidal, as was his younger brother, who used Chief Christian's gun to end his life.

He said an advocacy centre could be the salvation of those with nowhere else to turn. The next step is applying for government funding.

Two months ago, Federal Minister of Health Rona Ambrose announced a 10-year, \$100-million investment to "prevent, detect and combat family violence and child abuse."

*With a report from Matthew McClearn*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/study-shows-link-between-continued-abuse-of-aboriginal-women-residential-schools/article23874393/>

## **B.C. aboriginals hope to represent residential school day students in lawsuit**



St. Michael's Indian Residential School entrance, with two students on the driveway, Alert Bay, B.C. is shown in 1970. (Library and Archives Canada)

Geordon Omand, The Canadian Press  
Published Sunday, April 12, 2015 8:59PM EDT  
Last Updated Sunday, April 12, 2015 10:27PM EDT



VANCOUVER -- Two First Nations in British Columbia are looking to take the federal government to court on behalf of all the former day students of the country's notorious residential school system.

The Tk'emlups te Secwepemc and Shishalh bands are asking permission from the Federal Court to launch a class-action suit representing aboriginal children who attended residential schools but returned to their families at night.

"Every single one of them has a story similar to the people who resided in the schools," said former Shishalh chief turned councillor, Garry Feschuk, a plaintiff in the case and whose wife is a former day student.

"I really believe it's time that these people are heard and we start to heal our people."

Three separate class-action suits are being considered by the court: one for former day students, one for descendants of former day students and one for bands impacted by members who attended residential schools as day students.

The certification hearing starts Monday and is scheduled to last all this week, the allegations of which have not been proven in court.

Feschuk said he expects a decision to be reached by September.

In 2008, the Canadian government issued a formal apology for its historic role in the residential school system, but that did not include compensation for the day students who attended the schools alongside live-in students.

The lawsuit alleges day students suffered the same loss of cultural connection and language as their residential counterparts, who did receive compensation.

It argues that the program was an intentional element of Canada's education policy and resulted in serious and life-long harm to survivors.

Feschuk estimated there are more than 300 former day students belonging to the two representative bands, but he was unable to provide an overall number for the entire country.

"It's taken a lot of work to get us to where we are today," said Feschuk, adding that the legal process began more than three years ago.

"I'm just hoping that in the end we can achieve the justice that our people have been waiting for. They've waited long enough."

Justice Sean Harrington will ultimately decide whether the two bands should be allowed to speak for all of Canada's former aboriginal day students.

That decision could then be appealed by either side before going to trial, provided a negotiated, out-of-court settlement isn't reached in the interim.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/b-c-aboriginals-hope-to-represent-residential-school-day-students-in-lawsuit-1.2323872>

## Education credits remain elusive for many residential school survivors

**Thomas sisters still waiting for education credit, time running out**

By Ahmed Najdat and Peter Mothe, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 13, 2015 8:55 AM ET  
Last Updated: Apr 13, 2015 1:18 PM ET



As residential school survivors, sisters Bonnie Angel and Jackie Leech are eligible for an education credit. They applied in July of 2014, but have yet to receive the money they need to start their computer class. (Ahmed Najdat)

When the Thomas sisters were growing up, World War II was raging in Europe and electricity had not yet made its way to North Vancouver.

But Jackie and Bonnie — two of the younger Thomas sisters — still have fond memories of those years. They spent countless childhood hours outside, playing under the watchful eye of Lorna, one of their older sisters.

That is until RCMP officers started showing up at their house, and one-by-one took the sisters to St. Paul's Residential School.

Nearly 70 years later, back home at the Tsleil-Waututh Nation's reserve in North Vancouver, three of the Thomas sisters—Jackie Leech, Bonnie Angel and Lorna Ormandy—found out about the education credits program.

The program was launched in early 2014, and aims to compensate residential school survivors with education credits worth \$3,000.

Then and there, the sisters decided to embark on one more journey together: learning how to use Facebook.

## Personal education credits

The education credits program is funded with money left over from the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement signed in 2007. Survivors can use the credits to pay for cultural or formal educational classes, and can also transfer them to family members.

Since its launch, the program has received widespread criticism, with [some survivors calling it restrictive and confusing](#).

*'I've always loved education ... We're put here on this earth to learn.'* - *Bonnie Thomas, education credit program applicant*

But the Thomas sisters were eager to apply, choosing to pool their credits to take a class together.

"I've always loved education ... We're put here on this earth to learn," said Bonnie Angel, 74, who finished high school in her fifties and studied to become a professional caretaker in her sixties.

They set their sights on a computer course, hoping they'd learn how to use Google as a research tool, as well as Skype and Facebook to communicate with their children and grandchildren.

"You can use computers to check up on things, like stuff for the garden," said Jackie Leech, 76.

## The long wait

Despite having applied for the program in July of last year, the sisters have yet to receive the money they need to start their computer class.

And they aren't the only ones.

According to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), as of mid-March, nearly two-thirds of the 29,964 survivors who applied to receive the credits were still waiting to start their programs, which must be completed by August 2015.

'It's very daunting for them to go through another process that's so complicated in order to get something that is owed to them.'- *Kari Chambers, elder's coordinator, Tsleil-Waututh Nation*

The delays mean that the sisters will have less time to take their computer course, said Kari Chambers, the elder's coordinator at the Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

Chambers has been helping the Thomas sisters and other seniors from Tsleil-Waututh with their applications, which she describes as "tedious and long."

"It's very daunting for them to go through another process that's so complicated in order to get something that is owed to them," she said.

The process of applying for the credits was so complicated that the [Supreme Court of B.C. ordered that the deadlines be extended](#). The new deadline has allowed more survivors to apply for the credits, but has also affected processing times.

To apply for their computer class, all three sisters submitted multiple forms to Crawford Class Action Services, the court-appointed company that oversees the distribution of personal credits.

One of the sisters misplaced a signature on one of their many forms, but it took months for them to be notified of this error. This small clerical error led to a waiting period that continues to drag on.

"It's taking so long. Maybe I won't have a memory by the time we start," said Leech, who says she's called the survivors' hotline so many times that she was eventually told to stop calling.

"Good job we don't hold our breath. We'd be blue instead of brown," added Angel, trying to laugh at the situation.

## **An unfortunate prediction**

Chambers remembers the sisters joking during the long months in which they heard nothing about their application, saying, "I hope we get it before we're dead."



Sisters Jackie Leech and Bonnie Angel still hold on to the memory of their older sister, Lorna Ormandy. (Ahmed Najdat)

But their joke turned into a tragic premonition.

Last November, while they were still waiting to hear confirmation about their computer class, 82-year-old Lorna, the eldest of the three, passed away.

Lorna's death shattered the sisters' dream of taking the class together.

"I don't think there's been enough sensitivity given to the age factor," Chambers said. "I would put money on the fact that she is just one of many."

## **Rising above adversity**

The extended deadlines and the influx of applications "have resulted in slower processing of redemption forms and, therefore, issuance of cheques," explained Michelle Perron from the AANDC in an email.

'It is a message that you have to do this by our system, by our rules, and not the way that you would like to do it.'- *Kari Chambers, elder's coordinator, Tsleil-Waututh Nation*

For Chambers, this delay is another example of the paternalistic treatment of indigenous people by the Canadian government.

"It is a message that you have to do this by our system, by our rules, and not the way that you would like to do it," she said.

The Thomas sisters have been overcoming this type of paternalism since they were 6-years-old, and were taken away from their parents and forced into residential school.

But even in residential school, the sisters found ways to comfort each other.

"When I got there I just cried all the time. When they'd turn the lights out, I'd go get in bed with my sister," Angel recalls.

The sisters are determined to take their computer class and are eagerly waiting to start.

In the meantime, they continue mirroring the lessons their older sister Lorna embodied.

"She never lost her ability to laugh, she always wanted to learn, and she was a force to be reckoned with," Angel said.

*The series "siyólexwe: Stories of Elders and Seniors" is produced in partnership with the Reporting in Indigenous Communities course at UBC's Graduate School of Journalism.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/education-credits-remain-elusive-for-many-residential-school-survivors-1.3028184>

## **Residential day school survivors who lost language and culture seek redress**

By Tamsyn Burgmann, The Canadian Press Posted: Apr 15, 2015 12:39 PM ET Last Updated: Apr 15, 2015 1:18 PM ET



From the late 19th century onwards, aboriginal children in Canada were forced to attend government residential schools where they were subject to emotional, physical and sometimes sexual abuse.

Strappings, beatings with a pointed stick and orders to stand in the classroom corner for speaking her own language were among "horrific" measures that erased Darlene Bulpit's ability to pass along her First Nations heritage to her two children and three grandchildren.

The 66-year-old from the Shishalh Indian band, on British Columbia's Sunshine Coast, was allowed to go home at night and grins when she recalls learning to hunt with her brothers and bringing home "the prize."

Each morning she trudged back to school with dread.

As a day scholar for eight years, Bulpit said she suffered similar harms as thousands of aboriginal people who survived the residential school system. Yet unlike her peers, she was excluded from the federal government's historic apology in July 2008 and was never awarded compensation.

## **Overlooked in reconciliation process**

Bulpit is among hundreds of First Nations plaintiffs who attended the notorious schools by day and now want to sue the Canadian government contending they were overlooked in the reconciliation process.

A Federal Court judge began hearing arguments on Monday by two B.C. First Nations aiming to certify a class-action lawsuit for compensation. At least 300 survivors have been identified, but it's expected there are many more across the country.

"It's not over," Bulpit said outside court. "We all experienced the same situation. I'm seeking justice from government and a real apology."

## **Day students ignored**

Three separate streams will be considered by the court: for day school survivors, for their descendants and for bands impacted by members who attended residential schools as day students.

All students who were physically or sexually abused regardless of status at the schools were entitled to compensation under a legal agreement when the government acknowledged its role and produced a \$1.9 billion package.

But those children expunged of language and culture during the day were ignored, including those in the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc and Shishalh Indian bands in B.C., lawyer Peter Grant, who represents the plaintiffs, told the judge.

He said the honour of the Crown is at stake when it comes to fulfilling its legal obligation within the reconciliation framework.

"The harm goes deeper than physical or sexual abuse," Grant told the court in his opening remarks.



"These deeper harms affect all aboriginal children, not just those who were in residence..."- *Peter Grant, lawyer*

"As Prime Minister (Stephen) Harper said in the apology, the legacy of the residential schools is one of the loss of entire cultures. Language is no longer spoken, people broken and unable to celebrate their heritage.

"These deeper harms affect all aboriginal children, not just those who were in residence, all of those who were in the schools."

Grant said he will present evidence during the week-long hearing that illustrates culture was eradicated in the same way for day scholars as those who lived at the schools.

Under the government's policy of assimilation and pursuit of teaching only English, French and Christianity, it no longer had to forcibly remove children from their homes to have the same effect, he said.

Children were beaten and sometimes forced to put needles in their mouths. The results were considered a success by the schools. Parents stopped speaking to their children in their own language, Grant said.

Prior to the hearing, the legal teams looked on as the courtroom was blessed, a ceremonial song was performed and several regional chiefs donning headdresses were introduced to the gallery by Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/residential-day-school-survivors-who-lost-language-and-culture-seek-redress-1.3032862>

## **Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations**

**Made the Mistake of Wearing a Native American Headdress; Please Don't Wear One to Your Music Festival**

**Or anywhere, really.**

By [Brooke Shunatona](#)



This time every year, festival-goers – celebrities included – begin assembling the perfect [music festival outfits](#). I'm convinced there's an unspoken competition of who's the most bohemian goddess-like of them all ([Vanessa Hudgens](#) usually wins). You're bound to see an array of cutoff booty shorts, crochet bikini tops, face paint, flower crowns, and, unfortunately, headdresses. But despite the flood of articles written on the matter, I don't think most people who wear headdresses (also known as warbonnets) for whatever occasion know how offensive this is. I, for one, didn't.



You see, I once made the same mistake. It wasn't my intention to look like an insensitive asshole, but that's what ended up happening.

I'm a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, but I spent the better part of my youth uneducated about my Native American heritage. I knew that my last name meant "big

horse" and my grandpa was the treasurer of the Otoe-Missouria tribe, but that was about it. My dad and grandpa have always been involved in the traditions and practices, but I didn't take part because I didn't want to be different from my friends.

So a few years ago, I put on a headdress and took a photo. It belonged to my great- great-grandfather, but my dad has it now. It's the most incredible piece of art I've ever seen in person. When I held it for the first time, I was in awe of the intricate beadwork and embroidery, and how delicate the spotted and golden eagle feathers were. I saw it as a family heirloom, so I put it on for a minute and took a picture. I had no idea at the time that by doing so, I was disrespecting *my own* heritage, culture, traditions — and gender.

From cultural appropriation to the reinforcement of stereotypes, there are countless reasons why people shouldn't wear headdresses, but what most people don't know is that, by tradition, women do not typically wear full warbonnets. These are reserved for respected elders and men who have earned the right to wear them. This is probably a shocker to you because lately in pop culture, women tend to wear them more often than men. Whether it's on runways, magazine covers, or music videos, the imagery of sexy women wearing headdresses is everywhere. But a woman wearing a headdress is offensive. A woman dressed as a "sexy Indian," as [costume shops](#) market headdresses, and wearing a headdress is extremely offensive. I would soon come to learn this.



After I took the photo, I posted it on Facebook and went about my young, ignorant life. I got a lot of likes and comments saying how cool it was, but I didn't really think about it again until a couple of months later, when I was skimming through my Facebook feed and saw something a female family member of mine posted:





As soon as I saw it, my stomach sank. I was completely embarrassed that I had posted a picture of myself wearing a headdress, but I was more ashamed that I had no idea of the deeper meaning behind what I was doing. I immediately did some researching online and found that the facts on the graphic were painfully true. According to the [Justice Department](#), 1 out of every 3 Native American women has been raped or experienced attempted rape, and the rate of sexual assault against Native American women is more than twice the national average. I didn't wear the headdress for long, a couple minutes at most, and I didn't wear it with a bra top either. But the fact that I, a woman, wore one at all was enough to do damage. I thought about all my Facebook friends who saw the photo and felt inspired to take a similar picture or maybe even wear one to a festival or dress up as a "sexy Indian" for Halloween. I was so disappointed in myself. I saw so many photos soon after that of girls dressing up in cute, skimpy, fake-suede fringe outfits and feathers, thinking it was fun and harmless. I know they didn't realize that by dressing as a "sexy Indian," they were sexualizing a group of women who are victims of sex crimes and already devastatingly sexualized.

I didn't know that by wearing that headdress years ago, I was tapping into some deeply rooted issues that our country's native people have been suffering through for many years. I simply thought it was cool and wanted a photo. Much like anyone else who has ever worn one without earning the right to wear one.

If you have plans to go to a festival this year, I beg you not to pick up that cheap, synthetic headdress and to opt for completely inoffensive accessories instead. I'm all for people being free at festivals and not caring what other people think about them and their outfit choices (That's the point of dressing up at a festival anyway, right?), but I only

hope that you learn from my mistakes and not do so at the expense of other women. Besides, I hear [flower crowns](#) are in style this year.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cosmopolitan.com/style-beauty/fashion/advice/a38218/native-american-headaddress-music-festival/>

## Ending Our Self-Deception Regarding the Term 'Indigenous'

[Steven Newcomb](#)

4/10/15

Given that the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is about to convene in New York for its 14<sup>th</sup> session, it seems fitting to once again revisit the term “indigenous” in the context of the United Nations. In his amazing book *A Poetic for Sociology* (1977), Richard H. Brown says that “the ‘thing itself’ is emergent in the process of its being named.” (p. 148). We might say that we became “emergent” as “indigenous” when others began to apply that word to us, and especially when we made the decision to begin applying the word “indigenous” to ourselves.

Interpretative implications followed when we “became emergent” as “indigenous,” for it is not possible to use a word without also using the interpretations that accompany that word in different contexts and for different purposes. In the context of the U.N. the word “indigenous” means “colonized.” And the phrase “indigenous peoples” means, peoples that have been colonized (forced under domination) and never decolonized.

What is typically called decolonization is partly a mental process which involves becoming highly conscious of the way in which dominating colonizers have used their language and their meanings to dominate us. Given that our nations and peoples have been metaphorically “woven” into a deceptive language “web” of domination, there is much to be gained by examining each linguistic strand, along with the metaphor “indigenous” in the context of the United Nations.

Becoming highly conscious requires ending self-deception wherever it exists. We need to become hyper conscious of when and the extent to which we have named ourselves with words that benefit the colonizers, while maintaining the processes and patterns of domination. The word “Indigenous” is an example of how using dominating words to name ourselves can serve to reinforce rather than end the colonization and domination of our nations and our lives.

The United Nations Human Rights Centre (UNHRC) in Geneva, Switzerland has published a series of what it has called “Human Rights Facts Sheets.” The “sheets,” the UNHRC tells us, “are intended to assist an ever-wider audience in better understanding

basic human rights” and to better understand “what the United Nations is doing to promote and protect” those rights.

That probably sounds great to the average person. But what if it turns out that the very idea of “human rights” in the context of the U.N. is one of the phrases that actually serves to reinforce rather than end colonization and domination for our nations and peoples? How? By framing our existence on the basis of human “individuals” and thereby drawing attention from our identity as original *nations* of Great Turtle Island. And by failing, due to that individualized focus, to challenge the assumption of “State” domination over our originally and still rightfully free nations. The United Nations considers “human rights” to be “rights” of individual humans under or beneath the presumed authority, control, and domination of “the state.”

What if the phrase “Indigenous peoples” is also being used to keep our originally and still rightfully free nations down and under the presumed domination of the states? After all, the states of the U.N. system tend to presume that our nations are validly under the dominating “thumb” of both the states and the international state system.

The “fact sheets,” so we are told, have also been published to enable people to better understand “the international machinery available to help realize those rights.” The use of a machinery metaphor indicates that the entire subject is being thought of against the cultural backdrop of an industrial and mechanistic worldview generally associated with the French philosopher René Decartes.

“The Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” Fact Sheet No. 9, provides us with the UN Human Rights Centre explanation of the term “indigenous peoples.” It explains how the phrase “human rights” is to be interpreted in relation to peoples termed as “indigenous.” The context itself is revealed by focusing on the dominating peoples who are also considered to be the “non-indigenous” peoples.

How does the fact sheet pamphlet characterize the non-indigenous peoples? Here are some of the phrases used for that purpose: they are “peoples of different cultures or ethnic origins [who] arrived” to the place where the original peoples were living, and “the new arrivals later becoming dominant.” How did they become dominant? “[T]hrough conquest, settlement or other means.” They became dominant, in other words, through various means and techniques of domination such as “conquest” and “settlement.”

Other clarifying phrases in the pamphlet include: “whenever dominant neighbouring [sic] peoples have expanded their territories.” How did these “dominant” (dominating) peoples expand their territories? By “settlers from far away” acquiring “new lands by force.” The lands of the peoples deemed to be “indigenous” are being called “new” lands. How did the invading dominating peoples acquire the lands the UN pamphlet calls “new?” By seizing or assuming a right of domination over the territories of those nations and peoples already existing in the places the invaders desired to acquire and take by force.

Thus, the terms invading, force, dominant, settlers, expand their territories, and conquest are indicators of the Domination System within which individual “human rights” are being conceptualized. Those who are considered to be in need of “human” rights are those peoples that the invaders deemed non-human or subhuman at the time of the invasion of the lands and territories of the original peoples. The peoples of today are considered in need of “human” rights because of the invaders engaged in both domination and dehumanization.

But here the key point: The concept of “rights” called “human” in the UN does not posit a need to end the state system of domination that was initially imposed on the original pre-invasion, pre-domination, pre-dehumanized peoples. The system of domination created by states is considered the bedrock that is to be maintained because that system of domination is considered to be a matter of “national security” for the system of state domination.

Moreover, the “human” rights of peoples termed “indigenous” are not considered to include a right to maintain a form of nationhood and territoriality that is able to contradict the domination system of the state that the UN Human Rights Centre says has been dominating original nations and peoples.

The UN high-level plenary meeting that was erroneously known as a “World Conference on Indigenous Peoples” produced an Outcome Document that some have praised as noteworthy. However, that document does not even purport to begin addressing let alone ending the state system of domination that has been imposed on our nations and peoples. We need something more than the typical view of rights called “human” to end the conceptual and behavioral system of state domination that has been and continues to be used against our nations and peoples.

*Steven Newcomb (Shawnee, Lenape) is co-founder and co-director of the Indigenous Law Institute and author of Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery (Fulcrum, 2008). He has been studying U.S. federal Indian law and international law since the early 1980s.*

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/04/10/ending-our-self-deception-regarding-term-indigenous>

## **Native Americans protest Chief Wahoo logo at Cleveland Indians home opener**

Native American groups have protested the Indians’ grinning, red-faced logo for years, but the cries for change are only growing in volume



Indians protest Photograph: Daniel McGraw for the Guardian

Daniel McGraw in Cleveland

Saturday 11 April 2015 16.52 BST Last modified on Monday 13 April 2015 06.46 BST

The [Cleveland Indians](#) started their 100th season this year as a team with a moniker and logo that many consider demeaning to Native Americans, and while many fans attending Friday's home opener were celebrating with their beloved Chief Wahoo gear, there were about 50 protestors outside the stadium who seemed even more livid and aggressive about their disgust with team nickname than in previous opening day protests.

For several hours, as thousands of fans walked past the protestors on their way to the stadium gates, demonstrators with bullhorns chanted "Your outfits are racist, stop wearing red faces!" and "Where's your bedsheet?" to the fans, many of whom were wearing clothing adorned with the grinning Chief Wahoo, what one writer once called "the only professional sports logo in the Western world that caricaturizes a race of people".

Small groups of Native Americans have been protesting on opening day outside the stadium in Cleveland for the past 20 years or so, mostly to fan and local media indifference. But Friday's demonstration was bigger and more vocal according to most observers. Whether that is because the Washington football team is coming under fire for its own controversial nickname, or the increased minority protest over police shootings in recent months, there was more of an air of anger and resentment toward the fans wearing Chief Wahoo, rather than protests in the past that had emphasized more persuasion and reasons to change the team name and the logo.

Philip Yenyo, executive director of the American Indian Movement of Ohio, said the protest movement over the team's name and logos have been going on for years, but they have been getting the same answers and most are tiring of it. "All we hear is that this is the team's tradition, and it is that way because it has always been that way," he said. "Their reason we have it is because we always have. That's not good enough."

"But I think our people and others have come to realize that this caricature of our people as a red-face, smiling savage does great harm to us and our culture and has done so for many years," Yenyo said. "Think of it this way: if this team was called the Cleveland African-Americans, would the country permit them to have as their logo, Little Black Sambo? How many people do you think would be out here protesting that?"

Many Native Americans have been averse to most all sports nicknames using tribal names in recent decades – and a good number of colleges and high school have changed them through the years. But professional sports teams like the Atlanta Braves, Kansas City Chiefs and the Chicago Blackhawks have not even come close to considering that

option. Their usual explanation is that they are “honoring” Native Americans with their nicknames and mascots, not demeaning them or monetizing their cultures.

The Cleveland Indians have put out that mantra for many years, but recent academic research has made them backpedal a bit. In 1914, the team was known as the Cleveland Naps, in honor of their star player and manager and future Hall of Famer Napoleon Lajoie. But Lajoie’s contract was sold to the Philadelphia Athletics after that season, and the Cleveland team went searching for a new name. Cleveland sportswriters were delegated to choose a new name and they picked Indians, in part because the Boston Braves had won the 1914 World Series.

But when people in the 1960s started questioning why the team was named after a race of people, the Indians created a revisionist myth of sorts. The story was put out that the team was honoring Louis Sockalexis with the 1915 name change, a member of the Penobscot tribe who played for the Cleveland Spiders from 1897 through 1899. He only went to bat 367 times (about half a season for the average full-time position player) in those three years.

So it is highly unlikely that the team was honoring Sockalexis by naming the team ‘Indians’. Further proof is that none of the reports from the four daily newspapers in Cleveland at that time mentioned Sockalexis when the change was made in January 1915. The team no longer says the team name “honors” Sockalexis, but instead the organization is “proud to acknowledge and foster [Sockalexis’] legacy.

The Chief Wahoo logo, also has no tradition of honoring native tribes. It was created by an ad agency in Cleveland in 1947 and has been tweaked over time to become its current red-faced, big-teeth and triangular eyes cartoon character. It didn’t appear on the uniforms until the 1950s.

But hardly any of the fans going to Friday’s game seemed to know anything about the team’s name and history, and most said that the name and logo had to be kept because of tradition. “We aren’t degrading the Indians, we are participating in a tradition of this team,” said John Brittain, 71, who came to the game wearing a feathered headdress and claimed to being one-fourth Apache. “Part of me being a fan is to wear Indian gear, and that is honoring the Native Americans.”

Of course, others “honoring” the Native American people gave the middle finger to the protestors as they walked by and pointed to the Chief Wahoo on their clothing. A few even shouted they had tickets that needed to be “scalped” and asked the protestors how much “wampum” they could pay. Some of the fans were very provocative and walked into the middle of the protestors with red face makeup on.

“You should be ashamed of yourself,” Ruben Burunda, a Yaqui tribe member yelled to a young man with his face painted red, with a huge white teeth, and topped with a blue Mohawk. The young man said nothing as he paraded around, just posing for pictures with a grin and both hands giving a thumbs up.

“We are just getting so tired of it,” Burunda, a Vietnam War veteran, said after the face-painted man went inside the stadium. “We just don’t want our people, our culture, our heritage, to be portrayed as a mascot. I don’t think any ethnic group would like that. But they ignore this and think it’s funny, because in their minds we don’t exist and never have.”

Peter Pattakos, a Cleveland attorney who has long advocated for the removal of Chief Wahoo on his sports commentary website, ClevelandFrowns.com, said the dismissal of any discussion by Cleveland baseball fans that the logo and team name should change is emblematic of larger societal problems a century after the team named itself after a race of people. “There is this attitude that as long as they buy tickets to the games, as long as they are fans, they can say or do or wear anything they want,” he said. “They don’t see how this logo affects anyone other than themselves. No one will answer why we still need to have [Chief Wahoo].”

There has been some progress in Cleveland among the groups wanting the city to rid itself of both the team name and the logo. The team has added a “Block C” on its hat for some games instead of the Chief Wahoo, and a script “Indians” without the logo adorns the fronts of the jerseys. In short, the team still has the smiling red face on its jersey sleeve, but it is less likely to appear on the front of the hat. But like Washington football team owner Daniel Snyder, there seems to be no thought to “de-chief” the Tribe.

And part of that is because just about every piece of clothing sold by the team has the grinning Indian caricature on it. It is ingrained in the Cleveland sports culture. “No, Chief Wahoo’s not going anywhere,” Cleveland Indians president Mark Shapiro said on a radio show last year.

And it is in merchandising and sponsorship that may find the next salvos being launched in this mascot fight. “The Cleveland team plays at Progressive Field,” said Yeny. “Progressive Insurance is a publicly traded company. I don’t think their shareholders want to be associated with a team that promotes racist images. That’s not very progressive.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2015/apr/11/native-americans-protest-chief-wahoo-logo-at-cleveland-indians-home-opener>

## **Activist Rios taught others to remember Native American culture**

*By Emily Rodriguez, Staff Writer : April 11, 2015*



## More Information

**Reynaldo G. Rios Jr.**

**Born:** Sept. 1, 1962, San Antonio

**Died:** April 5, 2015, San Antonio

**Survived by:** Father Reynaldo Rios Sr. and stepmother Linda; mother Patricia Rios and stepfather Richard Ibarra

**Services:** Funeral 10 a.m. Saturday at St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church, 1314 Fair Ave.

As thousands came together for the annual Cesar Chavez March for Justice, a familiar face was missing from the crowd. For the first time in more than a decade, [Reynaldo Rios Jr.](#) could not perform the blessing of the pathway at the head of the march.

Suffering a stroke six years ago and losing function of the left side of his body, Rios never failed to walk at the head of the march with his mother, [Patricia Rios](#), wearing a large feather headdress and indigenous clothing.

“He wasn’t a guy who got sick and passed away. He was dealing with symptoms but it never stopped him,” longtime friend [Gabriel Velasquez](#) said. “He could barely walk, but he still showed up to all of the meetings.”

Rios died April 5. He was 52.

His interest in activism began while attending [San Antonio College](#), where Rios became interested in genealogy and learned that he descended from the Coahuiltecan tribe whose lands spanned through parts of South Texas and Mexico.

Fascinated by the discovery, Rios began to learn more about the Native American culture and eventually taught himself to speak Anahuac through reading books, the language spoken by the Aztecs.

“He was a very strong believer that Native Americans got the raw end of the deal. He wanted to restore the dignity of Native Americans by telling their story,” Velasquez said.

Although a dedicated Catholic, Rios founded the Native American [Church of Yanaguana](#) in 2010, drawing members from the surrounding cities and Austin.

Rios was a walker of the Red Road, a Native American belief of walking the creator’s path of truth, friendship, respect and spirituality. He served as a roadman for other walkers of the Red Road, which is the equivalent of a priest.

Among the various other Native American educational groups Rios founded was Danza Azteca de Yanaguana. He used the group to hold dance workshops throughout the city and local universities as a way to help others connect to their native roots.

“His heart was pure. That’s where all of his glory and excellence was,” Patricia Rios said.

Rios also was dedicated to fighting civil rights injustices and immigration issues, leading him around the country to speak at various venues including the Lincoln Memorial.

“It’s not how big the man is. It’s how much he was committed to his fight, and Rey was very committed,” Velasquez said.

Velasquez said the activist community will feel the loss of Rios’ passing and will honor him at the next Cesar Chavez march.

“We know that one of the fighters isn’t there. It’s a reminder that we need to grow more voices. The city has lost someone who did care,” Velasquez said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.mysanantonio.com/obituaries/article/Activist-Rios-taught-others-to-remember-Native-6192442.php>

## **Michelle Obama Stands Up for Native Americans, Says Natives Were Stripped of Their Culture**

[John Paul Brammer](#) | 3 days ago | [Heroes](#), [Justice](#)



Though it hasn't gotten much attention in the media, Michelle Obama made some truly groundbreaking remarks at the Generation Indigenous convening Wednesday on the topics of [Native American youth](#) and [Native American history](#).

The White House has posted a transcript of her full remarks online and it is available [here](#).

But I would like to call special attention to the following excerpts in which the First Lady discusses the source of challenges facing [Native American communities](#) and the role of the United States government in stripping Natives of their culture:

"You see, we need to be very clear about where the challenges in this community first started. Folks in Indian Country didn't just wake up one day with addiction problems. Poverty and violence didn't just randomly happen to this community. These issues are the result of a long history of systematic discrimination and abuse."

The First Lady recognizes and affirms that many of the challenges Native American communities face have roots in systemic discrimination.

"Let me offer just a few examples from our past, starting with how, back in 1830, we passed a law removing Native Americans from their homes and forcibly re-locating them to barren lands out west. The Trail of Tears was part of this process. Then we began separating children from their families and sending them to boarding schools designed to strip them of all traces of their culture, language and history. And then our government started issuing what were known as 'Civilization Regulations' – regulations that outlawed Indian religions, ceremonies and practices – so we literally made their culture illegal."



What strikes me most about this statement is the ownership. "We" passed a law. "We" made their culture illegal.

It's a showing of respect. No one thinks the Obamas are responsible for creating the conditions under which Native Americans must live and survive. Michelle Obama, a black woman, obviously shares in the disenfranchisement and historical trauma that are hallmarks of the minority experience in the United States.

But in taking ownership – in that powerful moment of “we,” she acknowledges a truth that Native Americans have been trying to get people to understand for years: that the United States government committed acts of ethnic and cultural cleansing against the tribes.

Native Americans are still facing enormous uphill battles in this nation, battles over [land](#), hunting rights, [representation](#), and [autonomy](#).

It's nice to know they have powerful allies in the Obamas.

**Direct Link:** <http://bluenationreview.com/michelle-obama-stands-native-americans-says-natives-stripped-culture/>

## **Native American vs. American Indian: Political correctness dishonors traditional chiefs of old**

Published on Sunday, 12 April 2015 17:08  
Written by Native Sun News Editorial Board

Who decided for us that we should be called "Native Americans?"

It was the mainstream media of course. One day a reporter was interviewing an East Coast Indian and the reporter said, "Indian" and the East Coast Indian said, "No, we don't like to be called Indians because we got that name when Columbus thought he landed in India: We prefer to be called Native Americans."

"Well," the reporter replied, "I am of Irish descent but I was born in America so therefore I also am a Native American." And so when the story was published the Indian people were labeled as Native Americans. The white media had finally pulled one over the indigenous people.

The Lee Enterprise newspapers, and there are several of them in Indian Country, decided to cut this down even further and they told all of their reporters, editors and publishers to just use the word "Native" when referring to Indians, or to be politically correct, Native Americans. So when you read an article that goes, "He was a Native Rapid City guy" that doesn't mean he was Native, it just means that he was native. In fact everyone who lives in Rapid City is a native.



The activist Russell Means preferred the name American Indian. He would say that just as you have Mexican Americans, African Americans, or Asian Americans, you should have American Indians.

During the activist days of the 1960s and 70s the U. S. Government responded to the activists' protests by proposing the term "Native American." And so the anti-government activists decided to accept the name Native American, a name suggested by the United States Government, a government that they despised. Say what?

The other arguable explanation was Columbus's use of the term "una gest in Dios" or "a people in God" which was reduced to "Indios" for every day usage by the Spaniards and later was further changed to "Indian" as the word moved north. And what's more we hear that in 1492 Columbus could not have thought he had reached the Indies because at that time there was no Indies, but they instead were called Hindustan.

That sad part of this entire fiasco is that so many of the so-called "elitist Indians" have allowed themselves to be bullied into using the name "Native Americans" and even "Native" by a white media that seems to have set the agenda for what we should be called.

One elderly Lakota man from the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation said recently, "If some Indians want to be called Native Americans or Natives, let them be called that, but I was born an Indian and I shall die an Indian.

So if you travel to any Indian reservation out west you will soon discover that nearly all of the indigenous people refer to themselves as "Indian," especially the elders who are still fluent in their Indian language. As Chief Oliver Red Cloud said a few years before he died, "I am Lakota and I am Indian."

As an Indian newspaper we must be very careful that what we call ourselves is not dictated to us by the white media. We have been Indians for a few hundred years and the name carries our history. Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull and Little Wound (Read their quotes) all called themselves "Indian" and they said it with pride. Should we dishonor them by saying they were wrong?

Political correctness be damned: We will use "Indian" if and when we choose. We will not be intimidated by the politically correct bunch or the white media.

*The Native Sun News Editorial Board can be reached at [editor@nsweekly.com](mailto:editor@nsweekly.com)*

*The Native Sun News is based in Rapid City, S.D.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.nativetimes.com/index.php/life/commentary/11389-native-american-vs-american-indian-political-correctness-dishonors-traditional-chiefs-of-old>

# Bill Would Make Teaching Native History Mandatory In Washington

[Richard Walker](#)

4/12/15

A bill that would require schools in Washington State to include local indigenous nations in their history instruction is on its way to becoming law.

Ten years ago, the state legislature adopted similar legislation encouraging the teaching of Native American history. Working with indigenous nations, the state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction developed a curriculum, "[Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State](#)," which is available at no cost to school districts. But as late as December 2014, state Sen. John McCoy, D-Tulalip, estimated that only 30 percent of school districts in Washington State had adopted the curriculum.

McCoy sponsored the 2005 legislation and the latest bill, SB 5433. The bill was approved 42-7 by the Senate on March 11. It was approved on March 23 by the House Committee on Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs and referred to the Rules Committee for review.

SB 5433 has bipartisan support. Of 16 co-sponsors, five are Republicans, including Senate President Pro Tem Pam Roach, R-Auburn.

The House version of the bill, HB 1511, has 22 co-sponsors, five of them Republican, and was approved 62-34 by the House on March 4. It is before the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

McCoy said he couldn't get support for required instruction of Native history in 2005. The difference today: More understanding of the importance of including the state's indigenous cultures in regular school curriculum.

The 2005 legislation that established "Since Time Immemorial" seeks to improve student knowledge of indigenous history and culture; foster cross-cultural respect and understanding; and bolster cultural sensitivity in all students.

It also seeks to give more balance to history instruction, which has often ignored the state's indigenous history.

"We do have a rich, solid history in the state, and it should be taught," McCoy said in an earlier interview. Doing so would help students understand sovereignty and the work that indigenous nations do in their historical territories—authority that many elected officials don't understand, McCoy said.

The state Office of Financial Management reports that there will be no financial impact from requiring the teaching of indigenous history, because the curriculum is already developed.

“This [bill] requires districts to use the curriculum developed and made available free of charge by OSPI,” the Office of Financial Management reports.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/04/12/bill-would-make-teaching-native-history-mandatory-washington-159977>

## **Tribes battle high teen suicide rates on native American reservations**

**More federal resources may be needed to address the string of teen suicides affecting impoverished native American reservations, advocates say.**

**By Cristina Maza, Staff writer April 13, 2015**



Teen suicide has never been an easy issue for a community to grapple with, but the problem has become especially poignant for the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

On Monday, the Associated Press reported that a string of seven teen suicides in recent months has deeply affected the impoverished reservation, which spans a vast area along the South Dakota-Nebraska border.

"The situation has turned into an epidemic," Thomas Poor Bear, vice president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, whose 24-year-old niece was one of two adults who also committed suicide this winter, told the [Associated Press](#). "There are a lot of reasons behind it. The bullying at schools, the high unemployment rate. Parents need to discipline the children."

Among native Americans ages 15 to 24, suicide rates are more than double the national average, the [Monitor's Stacy Teicher Khadaroo reported](#). The suicides are taking place amid a host of social problems including alcoholism and drug abuse, bullying, violence, high unemployment and school dropout rates, and high levels of poverty and deprivation. Reversing a feeling of hopelessness is vital, advocates say.

Advocates stress that native American youth are a resilient group searching for solutions to their problems. But more federal resources are needed to address the deep-seated issues, they say.

“The federal government made promises that it isn’t meeting. It isn’t an accident that these communities are having problems. There is a history of trauma, of genocide. In exchange for land we promised them services and we’ve chronically underfunded them. But this is a community full of inspiring and resilient young people, but they don’t have equal access to opportunities,” says Erin Bailey, executive director of the Center for Native American Youth at the Aspen Institute.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for American Indian/Alaskan Native youth, [according to the Center](#), and native teens have the highest suicide rates of any population group in the US.

One initiative on the Pine Ridge Reservation that aims to use the community’s cultural heritage to prevent suicide is a program called Sweetgrass, which draws on traditional tribal values to teach people how to respond when someone is suicidal. The program focuses on tribal concepts such as Wowaunsila, having compassion for others, and Wokigna, comforting people who are experiencing psychic pain, to interact with individuals who have suicidal tendencies. These activities are especially important in isolated areas where it may take over an hour for emergency personnel to respond to a call, the center’s [website says](#).

A number of tribes are using their traditions and cultural identity as a means of reaching at-risk youth. For example, on the neighboring Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, staff in a reservation-run juvenile detention facility use tribal traditions to rehabilitate juvenile offenders.

“We are trying to integrate traditional Lakota cultural information, and rehabilitate our youth by bridging the gaps they might have with their identities and who they are,” Miskoo Petite, who runs the program, told [The Washington Post](#).

But more resources are needed to address the problems that have been afflicting tribal communities for generations, advocates say, pointing to chronic underfunding by the government.

For one thing, Native American youth make up a larger percentage of the population. There are 1.2 million American Indian and Alaska Native young people under the age of 25 – 42 percent of the population, according to data from the National Congress of

American Indians. That's compared with 34 percent of the total US population under 25. And almost one-third – 32.4 percent – of native American youth under 18 live in poverty, according to the NCAI Policy Research Center.

Meanwhile, unemployment among native Americans is almost double that of the rest of the population, [US News & World Report](#) reported.

Almost 1,000 suicide attempts were recorded on the Pine Ridge reservation between 2004 and 2013, the Associated Press reported. And the recent string of teen suicides on Pine Ridge has also [transpired](#) on other reservations across the country in previous years. On the Rosebud Reservation, 47 teenagers committed suicide over a two year period and at least two children a day are victims of a crime or exposed to abuse, neglect, or violence in school, the Washington Post [reported](#) in November.

Despite the bleak picture, attention from high-profile supporters has made some tribal leaders hopeful that the government will begin to recognize the scope of their needs, Ms. Bailey says.

During a recent event organized by the United National Indian Tribal Youth, first lady Michelle Obama said that the problems faced by many native American communities are due to historical grievances that should be addressed.

“You see, we need to be very clear about where the challenges in this community first started. Folks in Indian Country didn’t just wake up one day with addiction problems. Poverty and violence didn’t just randomly happen to this community. These issues are the result of a long history of systematic discrimination and abuse,” [Mrs. Obama said](#).

“Supporting these young people isn’t just a nice thing to do, and it isn’t just a smart investment in their future, it is a solemn obligation that we as a nation have incurred.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/USA-Update/2015/0413/Tribes-battle-high-teen-suicide-rates-on-native-American-reservations>

## **Millions of Montanans, Alaskans, Native Americans wait for Medicaid Expansion**

[Mark Trahant](#)

4/15/15

The best case for Medicaid expansion in Alaska is being delivered by Valerie Davidson. She’s the recently appointed [Commissioner of Alaska’s Department of Health and Social Services](#) and a longtime advocate for improving Native health, most recently the senior director of Legal and Intergovernmental Affairs at the [Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium](#).

Davidson, who's Yupik and a member of the Orutsararmiut Native Council, also chaired the Tribal Technical Advisory Group to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services from its launch in 2004 until last year. In other words: She knows Medicaid cold. She knows how it benefits a state. She understands what works for Native communities. And, she conveys complicated ideas and statistics with ease.

This is the ideal time for that kind of logic.

Alaska's Medicaid expansion has reached a decision point. The [Alaska Dispatch News reported Tuesday](#) that the governor is threatening a veto unless the Legislature takes on Medicaid reform and expands eligibility under the Affordable Care Act.

At a recent speech in Juneau, Davidson ticked off five reasons why Medicaid expansion makes so much sense.

First, it would expand health care insurance, thus improving health access for at least 42,000 Alaskans. Second, expansion would add money — and jobs — to a state that could use both right now. Third, expansion improves the state's budget situation by adding more than a billion over the next six years. Fourth, it could be a catalyst for reform. And, fifth, expansion addresses uncompensated care.

Uncompensated care is perhaps the most important part of the Medicaid debate and it does not get a lot of attention. Even if government were to eliminate Medicaid or other insurance, people would still have health care costs. Someone always has to pay.

“We all end up paying for those uncompensated care costs. We pay through increased premiums. We pay for them when a hospital has to increase what it charges everybody else,” Davidson said. She said the hospitals provided more than \$90 million worth of uncompensated care in Alaska.

Nationally the figures are huge. The Kaiser Family Foundation estimated uncompensated care at \$84.9 billion in 2013. Most of that was paid for by hospitals (who pass the cost along to paying patients) and community-based clinics and health centers.

But here is the thing: The states that have expanded Medicaid are seeing the cost for uncompensated care figure dropping dramatically, [saving those states some \\$5 billion](#).

The Indian health system has its own version of uncompensated care. We all understand and see the Indian Health Service as the government's fulfillment of its treaty promises made to tribes. But the government does not fund IHS that way; the underfunding is substantial. The original Indian Health Care Improvement Act opened up new revenue from Medicare, Medicaid and other programs to add new dollars to the system.

So since the United States doesn't fully fund IHS — and Indian country has low insurance coverage — there remains a gap. Uncompensated care. Kaiser Family

Foundation found that nearly a third, or 32 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives are uninsured, and the cost to IHS for that care was at least \$2.1 billion in 2013.

That's why Medicaid expansion is critical to improve funding for Indian health delivery — especially in states with large Native populations such as Alaska and Montana.

Montana's [uncompensated care is nearly \\$400 million, according to the Montana Budget and Policy Center](#).

The Montana Legislature is nearing the finish line. Last week a key House committee voted to radically amend the legislation, essentially killing Medicaid expansion. For a bit. Then the legislation made it to the [House floor where it passed 54 to 42](#) returning it to the Senate for minor changes. Supporters are hoping the Senate will make those changes and send the bill to the governor for his signature.

When the House passed the Medicaid legislation, a conservative group, [Americans for Prosperity Montana](#), issued a press release saying the “decision stands directly against the voices of millions of Montanans who have made it clear that they do not want more Obamacare.” That phrase, #millionsofmontanans, quickly became a hashtag on Twitter (Montana has just barely a million citizens).

But Medicaid expansion would benefit millions — Montanans, Alaskans, Native Americans, and people in other states. What makes this argument interesting is that conservatives have lost on the evidence. In state after state the research continues to mount that Medicaid expansion was the best part of the Affordable Care Act and is creating jobs and pumping dollars into state economies. A study by [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) says the total amount lost for states that have said “no” is more than \$423 billion.

What makes this “debate” particularly maddening is that opponents to Medicaid expansion have no viable alternative — except the system that sticks hospitals, clinics and doctors with even more uncompensated care.

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Read more at <https://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/04/15/millions-montanans-alaskans-native-americans-wait-medicaid-expansion-160015>

## **Native American expat facing homelessness in Kent County**



## **74 year-old American John Wayne Harmon is facing homelessness and deportation after a land deal gone wrong**

By Tori Weldon, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 15, 2015 12:46 PM AT Last Updated: Apr 15, 2015 5:53 PM AT

A 74 year-old Vietnam War veteran who made a home for himself in Kent County almost a decade ago is out on the streets.

John Harmon lost his home, most of his livestock and 20 hectares of land when the RCMP showed up at his door to evict him last week. Harmon says it's because of a land deal gone wrong.



Life-long Adamsville resident Robert Bernard and friend John Wayne Harmon talk about finding a new piece of land where Harmon can call home. (Tori Weldon/CBC)

Harmon says he paid \$12,000 to a woman who owned the parcel of land, including a dilapidated house. He kept a ledger of the payments between 2008 and 2011, but he didn't get the deed.

"I called her three or four times. I don't drive so it's hard to get there," he said. "She never responded."

So when Harmon's neighbour bought the property earlier this year, with the proper paperwork, Harmon was out of luck.

The same day Harmon was removed from his home, border patrol services got involved in his case, and he was threatened with deportation.

Harmon says he's a member of the American Indian band Lenni Lenape Nation, which he believes would allow him to stay in Canada. But Harmon doesn't have a status card to prove it. He's gathering any documentation he has and will present his case to Citizenship and Immigration Canada later this week.

'Seemed like I had the rug dragged, snatched out from under my feet.'- *John Harmon*

"Seemed like I had the rug dragged, snatched out from under my feet you know," he said.

Friends and neighbours in Adamsville have rallied around the man, giving him food, a place to sleep and helping him with his one remaining piglet, Dougie.

Friend Willi Nolan says the situation makes her feel like crying.

"All John wants is what he had, a place to live with his animals in peace.

"(He had) a beautiful peaceful quiet life and(was) a good neighbor."



One of these piglets still belongs to Harmon. (Tori Weldon/CBC)

Retired farmer and friend Robert Bernard is also determined to help.

"We've already looked at some properties that he might be interested in. And that's what I'm hoping for, that he can find a comfortable place to settle and do his thing."

Harmon wants to stay in Kent County, the area has become home. And he isn't looking for much, his former house had no indoor plumbing or electricity.

With the support of his community, Harmon is willing to give life in rural New Brunswick another try.

"Hopefully I can get the deportation straightened out," he said. "And then, I'd like to start over again."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/native-american-expat-facing-homelessness-in-kent-county-1.3033709>

## **Manning: These 15 Native American Students Want Wilma Mankiller on the \$20**

[Sarah Sunshine Manning](#)

4/16/15

Recent public discussion of the proposed \$20 bill change has caught the attention of native youth on the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation in northeast South Dakota.

The late Wilma Mankiller, former Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, is among the final four women being for considered to grace the new currency, anticipated to be introduced in the year 2020. Harriet Tubman, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Rosa Parks are also on the final ballot.

For the organization proposing the change, [Women on 20s](#) (W20), the effort is about elevating women who shaped American history. But to high school students at Tiospa Zina Tribal School (TZTS) on the Lake Traverse Reservation, it is about much more than just elevating women. With Wilma Mankiller, among the ranks of other trailblazing candidates, the issue is also one of elevating the true history and accurate image of Native Americans.

Having a Native American leader on the face of American currency could potentially institute a redirection in American consciousness concerning Native Americans.

America has long continued a history of generating and justifying stereotypes concerning Native Americans, ranging from the dehumanizing language in nationally treasured historical documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, to the scores of disparaging Indian mascots. Such stereotypes have shaped popular American consciousness while simultaneously damaging the psychological development of Native American youth, and moreover, keeping the greater Native American community relegated to the sidelines of American society.

Today, Native American youth speak out, and students at Tiospa Zina Tribal School are taking action. Having background knowledge and coursework in Tribal Government, Federal Indian Policy, and American Indian History, TZTS high school students took to the [online ballot](#) to cast their votes for Mankiller.

Here, Tiospa Zina Tribal School students weigh in on the discussion, and speak to what it would mean to them to have a Native American woman on the face of the new \$20 bill:

**1. Demi Dumarce, Senior**



Demi Dumarce, Senior. Photo courtesy Sarah Sunshine Manning.

"To me, having a Native American woman replace Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill is empowering because it shows how resilient native people are. It shows everyone that even though Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act to get rid of indigenous people, we persevered and we're still here today, 185 years later." -Demi Dumarce, Senior, Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota

**2. Terrell Cook, Junior, Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota:** "This would bring a lot of pride to all Natives. She will be remembered as one of the Native American leaders, and it's for positive change."

**3. Jarrod Appenay, Junior**



“A president who targeted the Cherokee nation could possibly be replaced by a Cherokee woman, which would be pretty cool.” -Jarrod Appenay, Junior, Shoshone Bannock/Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota

#### **4. Jennifer Rondell, Junior**



Jennifer Rondell, Junior. Photo courtesy Sarah Sunshine Manning.

"It is important to have a Native American female figure to look up to. I think having Wilma Mankiller on the \$20 bill is a big deal in Indian Country. She is my role model, and I'm sure many people/children look up to her." -Jennifer Rondell, Junior, Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota

**5. Fidelity Eastman, Senior, Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota/Sicangu Lakota:** “It’s good to show equality between men and women. We need to be represented just as much as men. It’s awesome that Wilma Mankiller is Native American too. Every other race is represented in history, so we should be, too. She needs to be known.”

#### **6. Gabe Derosier, Jr., Senior**





Gabe Derosier, Jr. Senior. Photo courtesy Sarah Sunshine Manning.

"It would mean a lot to me considering that Andrew Jackson moved Native Americans onto reservations and he signed the Indian Removal Act. I think it would be cool seeing a native person take his spot." -Gabe Derosier, Jr., Senior, Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota/Anishinaabe

#### **7. Julissa Max, Junior**



Julissa Max, Junior. Photo courtesy Sarah Sunshine Manning.

"If she got put on the \$20 bill it would be so cool because finally natives would be remembered. But it would also be amazing to know that finally a woman is being on the same level as a man on the currency." -Julissa Max, Junior, Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota

**8. Jurae Renville, Junior, Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota:** "She represents our native culture, and with respect. She is showing that all native people are humans too."

**9. Savannah Pomani, Junior**



Savannah Pomani, Junior. Photo courtesy Sarah Sunshine Manning.

"If Wilma Mankiller replaced Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill, I would be very pleased. In my opinion, I think that they should have a Native American woman on the \$20 bill to show that all men, women, children, and elders from all races are equal." -Savannah Pomani, Junior, Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota

**10. Matthew German, Junior**



Matthew German, Junior. Photo courtesy Sarah Sunshine Manning.



“It would mean a lot to me because Native Americans are making a move- getting noticed.” -Matthew German, Junior, Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota

**11. Dominique Souksavath, Freshman, Oglala Lakota:** “It is important to me because our people have been mistreated and disrespected for years, and this is a step closer to acceptance of us.”

**12. Alyssa Redday, Junior**



Alyssa Redday, Junior. Photo courtesy Sarah Sunshine Manning.

"She is a role model to people who lost relatives on the Trail of Tears. And plus, it would be nice if we had a woman on the \$20 bill." -Alyssa Redday, Junior, Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota

**13. Mona Jackson, Junior**



Mona Jackson, Junior. Photo courtesy Sarah Sunshine Manning.

“I think it would be a positive change. Changing the bill would bring our people a little relief. I think it will also help the true history of our people be known.” -Mona Jackson, Junior, Potawatomie/Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota

**14. Keisha Kirk, Senior, Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota:**“It would mean a lot to have Wilma Mankiller on the \$20 bill, because she’s one of our people, and it will show that we are equal with everyone else, and this would make us feel better.”

**15. Tyler Bellonger, Junior**



Tyler Bellonger, Junior. Photo courtesy Sarah Sunshine Manning.

"I think having a Native American figure on the \$20 bill would do a lot of healing, especially for the Cherokee. Andrew Jackson did a lot of damage to Native Americans for their land. Replacing him is just what we need, and I think it will help change how people look at natives and maybe they will become more understanding. Hopefully this will help us in the future." -Tyler Bellonger, Junior, Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota

The growing public dialogue regarding the proposed change gives voice to the history of the first nations of America, our truth, and our existence today as beautiful thriving people. We are still here, and with each small victory, the savage Indian myth is fading.

On their website, W20 stated "Our money does say something about us, about what we value." To Native American youth, even just the possibility of having one of their own on American currency, says that they are valued. In Wilma Mankiller, they see a true reflection of themselves that represents strength, compassion, intelligence, and resiliency. They finally see themselves, in an authentic reflection of who the first nations of America truly are, and always have been.

"It's important to me to have Wilma Mankiller on the \$20 bill because she is a great role model and leader. She not only was the first female chief of her nation, but was also one of the first women to break the idea that only men can be leaders. She set and defied women's roles in society." -Amber Anderson, Senior, Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota

Go [here](#) to cast your vote.

*Sarah Sunshine Manning (Shoshone-Paiute, Chippewa-Cree) is a mother, educator, activist, and an advocate for youth.*

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/04/16/manning-these-15-native-american-students-want-wilma-mankiller-20-160042>